

THE PILGRIM

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NO. 1

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

THE SANDS OF TIME ARE SINKING

The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks;
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes;
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

O Christ, He is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted
More deep I'll drink above:
There to an ocean fullness
His mercy doth expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lustered by His love.
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

By Anne Ross Cousin, 1824-1906

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GOD'S WILL

Another year has begun. We hope and trust that all who read The Pilgrim intend to have God's will done in their lives. We also hope that in 1976 we can learn more perfectly what God's will for us is and learn to follow Him more closely. To this end we offer the following scriptures and comments for a New Year's meditation.

The will of God! What is it? and how can we know it? How can weak, mortal creatures, so far removed from God through the fall, have any certainty regarding the will of One so high and powerful? Though from man's standpoint this would seem hopeless, God has made it possible. Ephesians 2:13 says, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Because of God's redemptive efforts we can now be close to Him and know His will.

The source of our knowledge of God's will is His Word. We are like God in that we usually tell what we want and like--we express our desires. So God has expressed His will in His Word which He has given to men at various times through history. Jesus came as the final revelation of God's will. He is called the Word, and He declared that "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away." (Mark 13:31)

God's Holy Spirit is the Interpreter and Guide to the Word. He gives us understanding and brings the word to our remembrance so that God's Word is more than just words on a page. Through the Spirit, God's will is revealed to us in His written Word. The Spirit guides us into truth, and there is no conflict when He is guiding. If we find some spirit leading us into something that is contrary to God's Word, then we know this is not from God.

Our conscience is a less reliable means of knowing God's will. If it is educated and enlightened by God's Word it is a most helpful means of revelation. Cruden's Concordance says "A conscience can be educated, or trained to recognize good and evil, but its action is involuntary." Some years ago Charles Sheldon wrote "In His Steps", a book describing the life of a man that resolved to order his life and decisions by the question, "What would Jesus do?" This would be a good resolve for us all. It involves the use of conscience and memory of the Word and direction of the Spirit to know God's will in every situation. The underlying thought is that many times we know what Jesus would do but we fail to carry it out.

To do the will of God indicates a relationship to Him. Jesus said "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." (Mark 3:35) Blood relationships are unimportant in the light of this highest privilege of being joined to God. We can actually be born again into His family, through Jesus Christ. Then we take on the inherited characteristics of God's children and He dwells in our hearts.

In the Word we find that it is God's will that all men be saved. ". . . Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (I Timothy 2:4) "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9) Men have taught and believed that God wills to save some and damn others, but this is contrary to His Word and an insult to His goodness and love. He wants all and has invited all to come to Him through Jesus Christ.

God wills the sanctification or holiness of His people. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:" (I Thessalonians 4:3) We live in an age of permissiveness and "situational ethics". Men say that sin is wrong only on certain conditions and situations (for instance--if it harms someone else). This wicked idea

from Satan even finds its way into the thinking of Christians. We presume that the grace and mercy of God will cover our failings, and this is true. But let this never be an excuse for sin and unrighteous living. God's will is that His people are sanctified and separated from sin and worldly living. There is no such thing as having too much holiness. It is not true that Christians have to sin. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Romans 12:2)

It is God's will that we obey the laws of the government. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake . . . For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." (I Peter 2:13-15) To always complain about laws, taxes, regulations and government in general is not showing a spirit of submission and surely is not pleasing to God.

It is God's will that we be thankful. "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (I Thessalonians 5:18) Unthankfulness is a characteristic of the ungodly men in the last times. See II Timothy 3:1-5. "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy . . ."

We are to consider God's will in all that we do. Many times we forget and tell what we are going to do in the future. Men lay great plans and tell what they will do in years to come. James says (4:15), "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:6)

God's will in the future is also revealed to us. Jesus prayed "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John

17:24) He wants us to be with Him in glory. The world laughs at such a thought, but to the Christian it is a loving revelation of God's will for the future. It is God's will that we someday be delivered! "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (I Thessalonians 4:3) His will is further revealed in Ephesians 1:9,10: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

It is dangerous to know the will of God and not do it. Jesus said "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:48)

Sometimes we just feel that a course is the right one. Or we might even claim that God led me to do this or that. If in either case it can be proven by God's Word, we can be sure it is right. If, however, it is contrary to God's Word we must deny our feelings and realize it is not God's leading. God's Word is the test as our feelings are not always reliable.

We are to have the mind of Christ. Have we a mind to say like Jesus said ". . . nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."? (Matthew 26:39) I'm sure we say this and pray this many times--perhaps without realizing (as Jesus realized) what it means. If we mean it, our lives will take on new value. Our first consideration will be: What is God's will? What would Jesus do? is a valid question and a good guide. What does His Word say? should be our constant inquiry. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17) Let us, by the help of God, try it.

THE BAPTIZING

We were taught in our home never to speak lightly of sacred things. The seriousness of baptism was impressed on us early in life. Baptisms were high spots in church life: a time for uniting of hearts and reaffirmation of faith. All who could, went, of course. Usually it took place in some pasture in a stream or lake. This time, the Lord, being merciful, had shown our brother, Joseph (the oldest of seven children) his need of a Saviour and this was the day of his baptism.

He had wept as he confessed his need in the "family worship" circle. As I (his junior by eight years) had always idolized him as my "big brother", I could not understand why he thought that he was so bad. I had always thought otherwise.

A small boy's admiration of big brother always watched and was ready for encouragement. When he was chosen to stack straw at the end of the old time thresher, the small boy was no doubt the more proud of the two. When the straw carrier broke and big brother called them to stop, and one of the men said "Bless the boy," it seemed wonderful to have such an important brother.

Then there were cold nights when we laid, "spoon-fashion" in bed to keep warm. Here I was drilled in the alphabet and later in the multiplication tables. Our papa liked to see us together and planned accordingly. Big brother cut the wood, I carried it in; he led the animals to water while I pumped; I drove for him while he cultivated. He was always a ready doctor for all my small ills.

Sitting in the family circle while he wept, we children all felt "shook up" inside. I'm sure we all felt the same. If he had sinned, how about us? However, we were all praying children (we prayed at bedtime, kneeling at our beds, each taking turns according to age, repeating the time-honored prayer of childhood, "Now I lay me down to sleep . . ."), and did not question matters we felt were the concern of our parents. A sweet sacredness settled upon our home.

Our church group was admittedly strict. We knew something of the past struggles to get away from infant baptism. The brethren would ask the applicant for baptism, "Is this your choice?" The church rules were given and accepted. Individual and group responsibilities were taken on as a matter of course.

We children instinctively grew in his experience. We knew his sincerity. He was starting his manhood in open acceptance of the Christian faith, with the Bible as the inspired Word of God; knowing too he was setting an example for the rest of us.

There is nothing quite like Christian baptism outdoors in a flowing stream. We who have had this experience should be truly thankful. Of course all who have taken this step of faith in following their Lord should treasure those precious moments associated with their first love and obedience to Christ.

Someone had to go ahead to open and close the gate, where we left the road to follow some old half-forgotten trail through the bushes. Clouds of mosquitos awaited in the shadows, and one tried to tie his horse in the sunlight. Turtles and frogs blissfully sunning on the river bank and fallen logs promptly dived into the depths below. Noisy birds quieted to watch from some aerial perch. Grazing cows kept a respectful distance, the bells on their necks telling their whereabouts; a distant dog's bark showed he knew something unusual was happening. Small boys looked for flat stones to skip on the water, but were quickly restrained.

There was singing, perhaps the old favorite:

"In all my Lord's appointed ways

My journey I'll pursue.

Hinder me not, ye much loved saints;

For I must go with you."

Portions of Matthew 18 were read and commented upon and then all knelt in prayer "down by the riverside". The baptizer first waded in to find a suitable place, pushing in a stick to mark the place. The applicant was then immersed according to Bible formula.

There were tears of joy and fond embraces on the shore of the river. Time seemed to stand still as

eternity's values were "written with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever." The die was cast and there was no turning back. Happy hearts rejoiced with the angels in heaven.

There is joy among the angels,
And their harps with gladness ring
When a sinner comes, repenting,
Bending low before the King.

Tiny water skaters, their thread-like knees akimbo, came back to glide over the sacred spot. Wild things resumed their daily activities. Soon the last buggy left and there was nothing to show we had been there but our tracks on the shore.

In much appreciation,
James D. Cover
Mcdesto, California

From "Michigan Memories"

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN'S PRAYER

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke 18:9-14)

When we examine the parables that Jesus spoke to the people around Him, one of the impressive things that we

see is that there is so much virtue and depth of meaning in them. Even a short one like this of only 5 verses is not very readily exhausted. If we believe in Jesus' words, or in fact the whole Bible, then we believe it should have a controlling influence on our actions and conversation.

This parable was spoken to certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others. This is a habit that did not die out with the passing of Bible times but it still crops up in our lives today. One significant mistake of the people in verse 9 is that of despising others. How bright would our light shine if we as a people would not ever make this same mistake?

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." (Romans 14:4) My grandmother used to say if someone comes to your place and has lots of tales about others, you can be sure they will take lots of tales away with them again from your place.

If we, as the Pharisee in verse 11, are not extortioners, or unjust, or adulterers, then it would possibly be well to humbly thank God for this. But our righteousness is as filthy rags before Him, so it does not seem necessary for our virtues to be told to God or to those about us.

Possibly the most valuable part of this parable to us is the last part. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

--Paul Baker
Maple, Ontario

COMMUNION NOTICE

The Salida Congregation have agreed, the Lord willing, to hold our spring Love Feast on April 3rd and 4th of this year. A hearty invitation and welcome is extended to members and friends to attend.

—Daniel F. Wolf

THIS TROUBLESONE MINORITY

I note with concern that one Iowa and two Kansas districts of the American Legion have passed some very interesting resolutions with regard to what they think should be done to the pacifist or conscientious objector. These resolutions have been sent to Congress and have been read into the Congressional Record.

This attitude on the part of certain groups raises the question as to whether, since the majority rules, the minority is always wrong and should conform to the majority. The attitude of these three groups at least seems to make this their major premise for achieving democracy and justice. If we accept this view-point, then many serious consequences may well arise. Let us suggest a few of its implications.

First, all of us belong to some minority group. The groups passing these resolutions are minority groups. Any local political, church or fraternal group is a minority group. The white race is a minority group.

Secondly, according to this premise, right and wrong fluctuate with the size of the immediate crowd. If I happen to be in a meeting where I am of the minority, I am wrong simply because I am outnumbered. If, however, I can collect enough of my like-thinking friends to have a majority, then I immediately become right.

Is it not clear that any society organized on such a basis is the victim of selfishness and bigotry? Yet how important certain groups feel themselves to be (sometimes even church groups) because they are in the majority at the time. The majority may rule, but right and truth are not necessarily on their side just because they have the greatest number of persons.

Brethren, we ought to seek truth and pursue it even in the face of the majority. Let us always be insistent on it. Who is our standard for measuring conduct and action—the majority or Jesus Christ? If we choose Christ, we will find ourselves in the minority again and again. Such actions as those previously mentioned are an indication of the way groups are being segregated

and labels or stigma attached to certain unpopular ways of living. This is not new; the martyrs knew it too well. The blood of the martyrs still remains the seed of the church.

By James H. Elrod

Selected by Kenneth Martin

FOR THE NEW YEAR

By grace I will forget the things which are behind
and press forward to new heights.

Like David, "Lift up my eyes from which cometh my help."

Like Abraham, trust implicitly in His guidance.

Like Enoch, walk in daily fellowship with my Heavenly Father.

Like Moses, choose to suffer afflictions, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Like Daniel, to commune in prayer regularly.

Like Job, to be patient under all circumstances.

Like Caleb and Joshua, refuse to be discouraged.

Like Andrew, strive to lead my brother into a closer walk with Christ.

Like John, lean upon the bosom of the Master and partake of His Spirit.

Like Timothy, study the word of God.

Like Stephen, manifest a forgiving attitude toward those who seek my hurt.

Like my Lord Himself, overcome all earthly allurements.

Realizing I cannot hope to achieve these qualities myself, I shall cling to the promise:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

Selected by Ella Garber

BIRTH

CRAWMER - A son, Russel Wayne, born January 17 to Wayne and Linda Crawmer of Modesto, California.

PERHAPS TODAY

Perhaps today I'll hear the call,
And looking up I'll see
The Lord of Glory coming down
With welcome arms for me.

And in an instant all will change;
The world will loose its clutch;
I'll toss them by without a sigh,
These things that meant so much.

The work I planned with careful skill,
The things I meant to do,
The places I just had to go
Will dim and slip from view.

The house that gave me shelter here,
The flowers I trimmed with care,
Will fade from mind, be left behind
For better, Over There!

Then all my sorrow here on earth,
And cares that weighed me down;
I'll fling them all aside some day
And change them for a crown.

There all the rugged roads I've walked,
The miles I've had to roam,
Without a thought will be forgot
When Jesus calls me home.

And all that I can take along
Is what's gone on before;
The treasures that I've laid away
In Heaven's golden store.
So I'll go on with joy and song
And praise the Lord each day,
That I can share the harvest there
I'm planting here today.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (Matthew 24:36)

Vera Miller
Tuolumne, California

HISTCRICAL
DAMASCUS

"And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:3-4)

This is perhaps the most familiar reference to the city of Damascus in all the Bible. Paul himself related the story of his conversion on the Damascus road twice in the book of Acts besides this account. And what a conversion it was! He changed from a zealous, well-known persecutor of the young church (whose business in Damascus was to seek out more followers of Jesus for trial) to an equally zealous preacher of the gospel of truth who literally turned the world upside down with his preaching.

Damascus, the capital of Syria, is a very ancient city, possibly one of the oldest in the world. Although its origin is not definitely known, the historian Josephus says it was founded by Uz, son of Aram and grandson of Shem. This would place its beginnings only a short time after the Flood. It was a well-known place by the time of Abraham; his steward, Eliezer, was from Damascus. It was also mentioned in the account of the battle of four kings against five when Lot was taken prisoner and Abraham fought and rescued him.

Damascus of Bible times was apparently a beautiful place, due to the proximity of the rivers Abana and Pharpar. These rivers changed the area from hot, dry desert to well-irrigated farmland; they were mentioned by Naaman the Syrian when he went to the prophet Elisha to be healed of leprosy.

Damascus figured prominently in the history of Israel and Judah. Both kingdoms warred intermittently with Damascus and were often oppressed. The best known rulers of Old Testament times were Rezon, Ben-hadad, Hazael and his son Ben-hadad.

Rezon ruled Syria at Damascus during the time of Solomon and "was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon . . ." (I Kings 12:25) Ben-hadad, who ruled later, was apparently an ally of Baasha, king of Israel, for a time. However, Asa, king of Judah, persuaded Ben-hadad to break his alliance with Baasha; this resulted in war between Syria and Israel.

Another prominent ruler was Hazael, who was anointed by Elijah at the command of the Lord to be king of Syria. Hazael was a continual enemy of Israel and oppressed it mightily, as foretold by Elisha, who wept at the knowledge given to him: ". . . I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel . . ." (II Kings 8:12) Hazael's son, Ben-hadad, also warred against Israel, although he was not always as victorious as his father. These judgments against Israel were a punishment from God for their wickedness and idolatry.

Isaiah prophesied the overthrow of Damascus along with Israel by the armies of Assyria. (Isaiah 17) This was accomplished in 734 B.C.--Israel and Syria together attacked Judah, which asked Assyria for help. Assyrian forces under Tiglath-pileser responded by attacking and conquering both Israel and Syria in what is called the Galilee captivity. As in Israel, the people of Damascus were carried away to captivity, and Assyrian colonies were placed in Syria.

Damascus was dominated by Assyria for several centuries. In 64 B.C. Pompey of Rome captured the city. From that time, except for an interlude of Arabian rule, Damascus was a Roman province until 635 A.D. when it was captured by the Moslem Arabs. Soon after this it was made the capital city of the Mohammedans.

History relates that Damascus, following the conquest by the Moslem Arabs, has been under the rule of the Egyptians, the Turks, the Mongols, and the French until Syrian independence was finally declared in 1941. Damascus was retained as the capital city.

One of the most remarkable facts is that as Christianity was being introduced in the first few centuries after Christ, it spread rapidly in this area

and appeared to be well established. Then came the Mohammedans with their propagation of religion by the sword, and they were, as is well known, totally intolerant of Christianity. The result is that in this area Christianity has been nearly obliterated and replaced by the religion of Mohammed.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, and Encyclopaedia Britannica.

--Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

NEWS NOTES

10,000 people starve to death every day. Americans spent \$50 million in reducing pills last year.

13 times as many African as American infants die before five. Americans spend over \$4 billion on toys each year.

In U.S. there is one doctor for 650 people; in Ethiopia one for every 71,790.

—M.C.C. Fact Sheet on Hunger

Alcohol and other drug consumption continues on the rise. Yet, young people are asserting belief in God in increasing numbers. There are signs that secularization continues, but there are also those sophisticated Christian thinkers who are beginning to trumpet the bankruptcy of scientism and secularism.

—Gospel Herald

Once again a year has passed, and many have renewed the Pilgrim subscriptions already. We no longer send out expiration notices, but the date of expiration appears beside the subscriber's name on the Pilgrim envelope. Occasionally we send out sample subscriptions, not to place anyone under obligation to renew, but to spread God's Word by this means. Please forgive our mistakes and bring them to our attention so that correction can be made. Our thanks go to those who have contributed material or financial help, and especially to Dorothy Moore for her help in typing stencils. -L.C.

CHILDREN'S PAGE

The Man of Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-40)

When Philip's work was finished at Samaria, the angel of the Lord told him, "Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert." Philip obeyed the Lord and went there. He met an important man there—an Ethiopian, a dark man. He had authority as treasurer for the queen of Ethiopia. He must have been a Jewish convert because he was returning from Jerusalem where he had been to worship. He was reading Isaiah 53 as he rode in his chariot. The Spirit directed Philip to go to help that man. He asked the dark man if he understood what he was reading, and the man answered, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" He asked Philip to sit with him in the chariot, and Philip began to teach him about Jesus and what the scriptures meant. The Ethiopian wanted to be baptized and Philip told him the requirement: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The man answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Philip did baptize that believing man. The word says, "...and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." And then a wonderful thing happened: "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

1. The Ethiopian was reading the words of the prophet _____. (Acts 8:28)
2. Do you think Philip answered the Ethiopian's question when he asked "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" (See verses 34 and 35.)
3. But Philip was found at _____: and passing through he _____ in all the cities, till he came to Ceasarea. (Acts 8:40) —L.C.

THE PILGRIM

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NO. 2

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

HERE AM I

Here am I, Lord, take me wholly,
And my heart a temple make.
For Thy purpose use me solely;
All my time and talents take.
Empty me of pride and self, Lord,
With Thy Holy Spirit fill;
Let Thy grace on me be outpoured
That I may discern Thy will.

Teach me, Lord, to know my duty.
What wouldst thou have me perform?
Speak to me; show me the beauty
To be found when I conform
To Thy likeness, to Thy teaching,
That my inner life may be
Pure and simple, so it's reaching
To the outward, which men see.

Of Thy love I'm undeserving;
It is boundless, rich and free.
I would therefore Thee be serving;
Sacrifice my life to Thee.
May my life bring praise and glory
To Thy Name; oh let me be
Used to share the wondrous story
Of salvation rich and free.

—Miriam Sauder
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

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EXPERIENCED CHRISTIANS

After many years since being accepted in the family of the children of God, the household of faith, what has been our experience in this most important work? Have we been practicing our profession? Are we conscious of having accomplished anything or made any growth? Are we any more skillful or more able now to deal with a temptation, or to improve an opportunity than when we first began? Are we sufficiently experienced in the various problems and endeavors that arise in the Christian service that we could consistently offer help to the young or those newly come to the faith?

If we were seeking employment in the secular affairs of this world, either in the skilled trades or the professions, it would only be expected, in order to qualify, that we would need to have had experience in the line of service we were seeking. If this is so needful in the business of this world, is it any less needful in the business of our Lord Jesus Christ to effectively represent Him and His way of life to others with whom we come in contact daily, or occasionally, who may be partially or totally ignorant of Him and His claim on us? If they should ask us if we are experienced Christians, would we have anything worthwhile to tell them?

Webster's dictionary defines experience as: (1) the actual living through the event or events; (2) participation in anything through sensation or feeling; (3) the real life as contrasted with the ideal or imaginary.

The apostle James is speaking of Christian experience when he says: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like

unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1:22-25)

Again he says in verse 12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Each time we overcome a temptation or any obstacle in the way of Christian growth, we are more experienced than we were before and are better equipped to meet another and perhaps greater trial.

When we have actually lived and practiced the Christian life, then we know by experience that it is better than the vanities and evils which the world has to offer. In Jesus' sermon on the mount (Matthew 5: 44,45) He says: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven . . ." Anyone who has ever done this will have learned by experience more about the nature and love of God than could ever be learned by hearing it only.

The first ministers of the Gospel who accompanied Jesus during his ministry here on earth had experiences which totally changed their outlook and way of life. They were both witnesses and participants with Him, and there was nothing illusionary about it. The apostle Peter says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." They were not only witnesses to

such events as this, but they actually received the infilling and power of the Holy Ghost that came upon them at Pentecost, and they went forth in His power and preached the Gospel under many hazards, even to their lives, and performed the same kind of works and miracles which Jesus did.

The apostle Paul's life was rich with experience-- much of it of a spectacular nature. In II Corinthians 11 he gives an amazing summary of things which he experienced for the sake of Christ and the Gospel: he says, ". . . in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside these things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

This is more experience than any of us is asking for or expects to have. Perhaps it was needful for Paul, to fit and fortify him for the gigantic task that was his to do. We are not commissioned to do all that Paul did and will therefore probably not have all the experience that he had. But there are some less spectacular experiences which Paul relates of himself which would be to our profit to learn: he said, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." And he also said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

If I were to relate my personal experience, I probably would do like so many others have done: tell

mostly of the mountain top experiences, and not of the common things which are also most needful to all. There have also been many lonely desert and wilderness experiences which we are reluctant to tell. And sometimes, instead of being victorious, we have yielded to temptation.

For real Christian experience which everyone can participate in, and a most worthy goal, we can go to Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 13, where he tells of "the more excellent way" which is charity: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

If we are truly experienced Christians, this will be our rule and way of life and can be practiced every day wherever we are. It could well answer to what Jesus said in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5), "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The apostle Peter has summed it up in a progress and growth where he says, "And beside this; giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

—Daniel F. Wolf

BIRTH

ERNST - Esther Susanna, born August 27, 1972 and arrived in the Nappanee, Indiana home of Albert and Carol Ernst on December 6, 1975.

COMMUNION MEETING: Salida, California, April 3 & 4

THE REAL PROBLEM OF HIGHWAY SAFETY

Most of us are acquainted with a familiar scene: a line-up of cars on the highway; the presence of state policemen; the sound of sirens; sober faces; the approach of ambulances; and the impatience of motorists, as they wait until the wreckage and mess can be cleaned off the road (and the dead and injured can be carried away). Every fourteen minutes, someone somewhere in our country goes out into eternity because of an automobile accident. These are just hard cold statistics, but in back of each one of these tragedies is sorrow and suffering and bereavement and broken homes and broken lives. We want to look at the real problem, the Biblical solution, and some practical suggestions.

All studies indicate that the problem of highway safety divides into three principal parts: the driver, the highway, and the automobile. The safety programs that are instituted by the government are aimed primarily at cars, roads, and tires. And yet all safety experts agree that it is really the driver who is responsible for most of the accidents. Science and engineering can never solve the slaughter on the highway. Safety glass, padded dashboards, and seat belts will never conquer the problem. Highway safety is really a spiritual problem.

Highway officials say that the basic causes behind most traffic accidents are greed and selfishness and disregard for the rights of others. And so you see, most traffic accidents are really caused by an attitude of the heart. And it is the spirit of the devil (not of Christ) that makes a driver greedy, and selfish, and thoughtless of others.

It would seem then that Christians should be among the nation's safest drivers. They stand for total abstinence from alcohol; they have a sense of moral responsibility; they have genuine concern for other people. All this should point to extreme carefulness

in driving on the highway. But let's look at the real facts: A recent survey indicates that in every respect except one, the driving habits of evangelical Bible-believing Christians are about the same as the driving habits of non-Christians. The only exception is that Christians do not drive while under the influence of alcohol. People who have a respect for God's Word, and believe in the necessity of the new birth, and look for the second coming of Jesus--these people have just about the same driving habits as non-Christians, except that they don't drive under the influence of alcohol. They have just as many rear-end collisions (caused by following too closely); they have just as many accidents caused by excessive speed (they drive too fast); they have just as many accidents caused by failure to yield the right-of-way (they're inconsiderate of others).

We could go on, but we certainly see the problem. The driving habits of professing Christian people are much like those of the world about us.

We who profess Christianity have an obligation to drive carefully and safely on the highways. Our Christianity is not only to be confined to the church and the home. We need to take it with us behind the steering wheel of the car. Most people don't seem to associate careful driving with spiritual living, but there is a definite connection. We want to look at three portions of Scripture that relate to the kind of driving we do.

(1) Respect for life--the Bible says, "These six things doth the Lord hate, yea seven are an abomination unto him . . . hands that shed innocent blood." (Proverbs 6:16) Remember that the command "Thou shalt not kill" is just as full of meaning on the highway as it is for the man who commits murder.

(2) Respect for law--the Bible says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors." (I Peter 2:13) Peter had just pointed out that we are pilgrims and strangers in this world, but very quickly he adds this instruction to submit to

governments, to remind us that while we are really citizens of heaven, this doesn't mean that we have license to disobey governments here on earth. When the law says "Slow down at unmarked intersections", it means just that. When the sign says, "Stop", it means we should stop. When the law says, "Speed limit 35", it means we ought to gladly obey. According to Romans 13, Christians are responsible to obey not only traffic laws, but to obey every law of the country in which they live (as long as it doesn't conflict with a clear law of God). Christian people should be the most law-abiding citizens our communities have.

(3) Respect for others--"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but (let us love) in deed and in truth." (I John 3:18) The Bible admonishes that we should be charitable in our consideration of others. And a wonderful place to practice this admonition is on the highway. To "love in deed and in truth" when we drive on the highway means just plain thoughtfulness; it means not crowding the other person's car off the highway; it means slowing down in heavy traffic to let someone enter the flow of traffic from a side street; it means refusing to endanger the lives of others by driving insanely like a demon.

The following are good habits to keep in mind when driving on the highway. (1) Always plan to leave five or ten minutes earlier than necessary. (2) Always give way graciously to the other driver. (3) Always avoid carelessness and taking chances. (4) Never try to show off.

I think one of the most moving letters I've ever read was the one published in the Los Angeles News a few years ago. A mother was writing to a motorist who had been responsible for the death of her three little children on the first day of school several years before. "I'm not writing this letter (she says) to remind you all over again, but I'm writing it to all motorists (because school is beginning again). I want to help prevent the tragedy that occurred that morning." She says, "That morning, several years ago, three sun-tanned little faces smiled as they waved me

a happy good-bye, and went on their way to school. I wanted to call them back and tell them how much I loved them and how lonesome I would be without them. Mr. Motorist, I wanted to kiss them once more . . . and then I saw you take the corner. I heard your tires screaming; I saw your car was out of control; I saw it hit the children. What was your hurry? Were you late for work? Were you angry at someone that morning? Surely you weren't angry at my three. I'm sure you wouldn't run your screaming tires over their happy faces intentionally. But Mr. Motorist--children are very forgiving in life, and I'm sure they are forgiving in death. If they could, they would pat your hand, and feel sad that because of this one tragic moment, you have to live over and over again how that your love for speed has taken three innocent little lives."

The mother continues, "I don't hate you; I feel sorry for you. I can still see those smiling little faces as they waved me good-bye."

There was a P.S. at the bottom of the letter. It said, "Another year has come and your flowers have arrived once again. They are very beautiful; thank you."

When the newspaper received the letter, the editor sent a reporter to investigate. He found that the letter had been sent in by a friend of the mother of those children, and that the mother is still waving good-bye to the smiling faces of her sweet little children. The shock and sorrow and tragedy was too much for the mother's mind to take. Today she's a patient in a mental hospital, waving good-bye to her children, hopelessly insane.

I don't suppose any who read this article have ever caused a tragedy like this, but if you disobey the laws of the land, God may very well permit something like this to happen to you, and you'll have regrets all your life. I am sure some of you are very excellent drivers, but if you have room for improvement (with respect to the principles mentioned in this message), then take seriously what has been said.

Adapted from an article by Harold S. Martin in
Bible Helps Selected by Herman Royer

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE PARABLE OF THE
UNFORGIVING SERVANT
Matthew 18:23-35

In the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, Jesus has given several examples of what we should be, and of what our relations should be to each other as followers of Him. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, . . ." and He gives the perfect outline of the course to take.

So Peter asks Him how often he should forgive a brother who should trespass against him, thinking that seven times would surely be enough. And we know what the Lord said. Long before we would get to the "seventy times seven" we would surely have lost count.

Then Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant, who, though he was forgiven so much, would not forgive even a trifling amount.

As nearly as we can determine, the ten thousand talents equals well over eleven million dollars, while the hundred pence equals about seventeen dollars. What a difference! And yet, how so like our carnal natures. No matter how much has been done for us, or how much we may have been forgiven in some trespass against another, if someone does us wrong, the carnal nature in us is to hold this as a grudge against that one, especially if we have been wronged a number of times.

But now, let us try to realize, even though it is beyond our comprehension, what a terrible debt our heavenly Father has forgiven us by sending His only begotten Son to make the awful sacrifice and pay for our sins. Then, can we not see, at least to some extent, how trifling and insignificant are our little differences between ourselves? Are they not, then, similar in comparison to the example given in this

parable? Oh, how important, then, for the peace and welfare of Christ's Church, that we always have this spirit of forgiveness toward each other.

And thank God for the gift of His Holy Spirit to guide us so that we can overcome this carnal nature and have such love toward each other that this spirit of forgiveness can be a real part of our Christian lives, and that the warning at the end of this parable need not apply to us. And what a warning! Let us ponder it well: "So likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

--Daniel S. Wagner
Bradford, Ohio

OBITUARY

JOSEPH EDWARD PRICE, youngest child of Solomon and Mary (Maffit) Price was born on October 10, 1914 in Salida, California where he started to school. In February, 1921 he moved with his parents to Merced, California where he grew to young manhood. Gaining employment with the DelMonte Corporation, he moved to Rio Vista where he met Nellie Geometti to whom he was married on March 6, 1937.

He made his home in the Stockton and Rio Vista area until his death, at which time he was ranch superintendent with the DelMonte Corporation.

Those who feel his passing most keenly are his loving and devoted wife Nellie; one daughter, Celesta Anita Brown, and one grand-daughter, Debra Aldridge of Bethel Island; one brother, Arvine J. Price of Fresno; three sisters, Celesta O. Price, Orpha E. Wagner, and Martha Esther Gish, all of Modesto, California. His age was 61 years, 3 months and 4 days. He was preceded in death by an infant sister, his parents and his oldest sister, Mary M. Price. He was laid to rest January 19, 1976 in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Rio Vista, California. His memory will linger long with us.

His Sister, Orpha E. Wagner

BE NOT FAITHLESS, BUT BELIEVING

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." (Luke 1:1-4)

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount."

(II Peter 1:16-18)

These statements from two leaders in the early Church should help to fix in our minds the certainty of the Scriptures if we will accept testimony from eye witnesses. Many will not accept such testimony and pride themselves in claiming that they must be shown proof. For those who hesitate, God has special instructions. He says we can try His ways, accept His promises, and then see that God is true. "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." (Psalm 34:8) "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." (John 7:17) Thomas doubted that Jesus had risen from the dead until Jesus actually showed him the wounds He had received on the cross. He told him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29) We have this privilege today to "be not faithless, but believing." —L.C.

HISTORICAL

SAMARIA

Samaria was the capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. As is commonly known, the kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon was divided during the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. The Southern Kingdom of Judah remained under the rule of the house of David, and the ten northern tribes revolted and crowned as their king Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who was formerly one of Solomon's servants.

This division of the kingdom of Israel was a punishment by God for Solomon's idolatry. Unfortunately, Jeroboam was even more unfaithful than Solomon and his sons. One of his first acts was to set up two golden calves, one in Bethel and one in Dan, for the people to worship instead of going to the temple of God in Jerusalem. As the result of his idolatry, the house of Jeroboam was overthrown.

Approximately fifty years after the establishment of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Omri, captain of the host, rose to the throne through conspiracy and murder. Omri changed the capital from Tirzah to his new city of Samaria, which he built: "And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria." (I Kings 16:24)

The city of Samaria was built at a very favorable location. It was in the center of Palestine in the tribe of Ephraim, 42 miles north of Jerusalem. The hill on which it was built was steep, about 300 feet high, with a long plateau at the summit, and was surrounded by mountains on three sides. This gave the city a good military advantage.

Omri built Samaria about 880 B.C. and reigned there six years. When he died, his son Ahab began to reign, and he was in power twenty-two years. Ahab enlarged the palace his father had built, and it was evidently

a beautiful place. Unfortunately, Ahab married the notorious Jezebel, a Zidonian princess, who caused him to commit even greater sins than his father. His worst offense was to introduce Baal worship to the kingdom of Israel, which led to the famous contest on Mount Carmel between Elijah, the prophet of the Lord, and the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal.

Elijah's mission in Samaria and all Israel was to witness for the Lord and to show that idolatrous people His power and might contrasted to the false heathen gods they served. Other prophets were sent, too, to turn Israel back to God. Elisha was Elijah's successor and performed even greater miracles than had Elijah. Perhaps the most familiar of his miracles was the healing of the leper, Naaman the Syrian, in the Jordan River. Amos and Hosea also prophesied doom for Samaria and Israel unless the people repented; they also foretold a glorious restoration of the house of David.

Israel was fairly prosperous under Omri and his immediate successors. Then Jehu was anointed by Elisha to be king and destroy the house of Ahab and Baal worship. This he did, although he did not seek to follow the ways of the Lord when his kingdom was established. During the reign of Jehu, the Moabites rebelled and threw off the yoke of the Israelites. Also, Hazael of Syria took possession of Gilead and Bashan, and the Assyrians came and exacted tribute from Israel. Under Jehoahaz, Jehu's son, Israel was sorely oppressed by the Syrians.

Samaria and Israel began to revive politically under Jehoash (or Joash); and his son, Jeroboam II, recovered lost territory and brought Israel to its greatest extent. Jeroboam also remodelled the palace of Samaria and beautified the city at the expense of toil and lives of the poor. Unfortunately, every one of Israel's kings "departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." (II Kings 14:24 et al.)

The last forty years of the Northern Kingdom were characterized by anarchy and ruin. Four of the last

six kings were assassinated by their successors, and in 734 B.C. the Assyrians carried away the inhabitants of the northern and eastern portions of Israel (the Galilee captivity), leaving Samaria alone of the Northern Kingdom.

In 724 B.C. Shalmaneser IV of Assyria besieged Samaria for three years. Sargon of Assyria completed the conquest in 721 B.C. and took 27, 290 Samaritans captive and deported them to Assyria. He then colonized Samaria with people from Cuthah, Babylon, Ava, Hamath and Sepharvim, and sent one of the priests from among the captives back to Samaria to teach the people how to serve God. After this, while the people apparently acknowledged the God of Israel, they also retained the gods they had worshipped previously (see II Kings 17).

In 331 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered Samaria and settled Macedonian colonists in that region. This conquest was followed by more destruction under Ptolemy (312 B.C.) and others. John Hyrcanus, one of the last of the famous Maccabees, conquered Samaria in 128 B.C. after a bitter struggle. In 63 B.C. Pompey of Rome took control of the area and united it with Syria. Augustus presented Samaria as a gift to Herod the Great, who rebuilt the city in 27 B.C. and made it his capital. He also changed its name to Sebaste, in honor of the emperor.

It is well known that in New Testament times the Jews and Samaritans despised each other. Even though they believed in God, the Samaritans thought that Mount Gerizim rather than Jerusalem was the true center of worship. Since the Samaritans were descendants of the people placed in Israel by the Assyrians, the Jews resented their claim to be "children of Jacob". The Samaritans, in turn, felt they had a right to worship God their own way rather than follow the dictates of the rulers at Jerusalem. This enmity between the Jews and Samaritans was evidenced by the attitude of the woman Jesus met at the well; she was amazed that He, a Jew, would even speak to her, a Samaritan.

The city of Samaria gradually fell into decay with

CHILDREN'S PAGE

THE MAN WHO CHANGED HIS COURSE

Once there was a man who thought he should hurt the Christians and be unkind to them in order to serve God. The Christians were really God's people, but he didn't know it. This man put them in prison, threatened them, and even killed them because they believed in Jesus. Once he travelled to Damascus to hunt for more believers. Suddenly Jesus appeared to him so brightly that he was struck blind. Jesus asked him why he was hurting His people, and told him he must change his ways. He sent him to a Christian in Damascus to learn what he must do. This man received his sight and was baptized. He changed his course and became a great worker for the cause of Jesus. He even wrote some of the books of the New Testament.

Who was this man?

Fill in the blanks and find the answer.

1. And he fell to the earth, and heard a _____ saying unto him, _____, _____, why persecutest thou me?
(Acts 9:17)
2. ...Brother _____, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy _____, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:17)
3. Read Acts 13:9 to find out both his names. —L.C.

the rise of Nablus (or Neapolis) in Roman times. The Crusaders built a church on the hill several centuries later, where the tombs of Elisha, Obadiah, and John the Baptist were shown. This church was later converted to a mosque. Several excavations have been made of Samaria, all of which confirm the Bible accounts.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. —Dorothy Moore Modesto, Calif.

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"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

THE CHILDREN OF THY PEOPLE

I would sing one song for the children of Thy people
As they seek to walk Thy pathways, Lord,
As they turn to Thee from the lightness and the evil,
While they leave the things Thou hast abhorred.
Let us sing one song for the children of Thy people.
May they turn to Thee for comfort, Lord,
For Thou wilt not leave nor forsake Thy children
When they trust their all unto Thy Word.

Let us pray one prayer for the children of Thy people,
For we see not through the years, oh Lord,
It may be they'll linger to greet Thee at Thy coming,
Give them strength to love and trust Thy Word,
Let us pray one prayer for the children of Thy people,
For it may be we shall lose the cord
Ere the deepest trial and persecution cometh,
Do a strength bequeath them, Lord.

Make them strong to climb the mountains and to wrestle
With the evil springing o'er the earth;
Give them faith to look for shelter and for refuge
Should they meet with sorrow or with dearth.
Be Thou near to guide in the darkness or the tempest;
Be Thou near to shorten bitter days;
May they find Thee waiting in patience their coming
When they gain the victory o'er the ways.

—Lottie A. Cripe

Selected by Elsie Wolf

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TEMPERANCE

An otherwise devout Christian ate so freely of the bountiful Sunday meal and suffered so much discomfort that he practically missed the fellowship and Bible study of the afternoon.

A sincere middle-aged brother forgot that he was not as young as he used to be and played so hard with the young folks that he limped around on the job with sore muscles for nearly a week.

A young father became so engrossed in his interesting work that he neglected his sleep and his family and suffered in health and in family discipline.

A Christian mother tried alone to do a job too hard for her and, though she succeeded in canning the three boxes of peaches, her meals and her disposition were affected and her family suffered.

These and many more are instances of the lack of the quality called temperance. The Apostle Peter lists temperance with faith, virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity as characteristics that make us fruitful "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." (II Peter 1:8,9) He also says that if we do these things we shall never fall, but will be received into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How great and faithful God is to provide a way through the blood of Christ for our salvation and to ordain a Christian way to walk to please Him in this life!

The opposite of temperance is excess. It often means the taking of something that is good and using or doing it so much that it is detrimental and sinful. Excess is a tool of Satan that has wrecked many homes

and many friendships and has wasted untold hours of opportunity and service. It has spoiled the testimony of many Christians and has been the expression of weakness of character; the ruin of multitudes who would not let the Lord rule and reign in their hearts.

Excess is one of the inclinations of the human nature. Naturally, we feel that "if a little is good, a lot is better." If we like something or like to do something, we tend to go to excess in it. We see it in children where this nature is expressed without shame or pretense (and without guilt if the parents are correcting and disciplining). If a child likes dessert, he will skip the most nourishing foods to indulge completely in that which he likes best. Therefore we can recognize indulgence and excess as a sign of immaturity and a sign that the old nature is not completely under control.

Who of us is not somewhat affected by this problem? It is especially evident in a culture so abundant in good things to eat and exciting and enjoyable things to do as ours is. We tend to think that we have a right to all we can afford in the way of luxuries and gadgets and work-saving devices. But this shows up as excess and intemperance when compared to other cultures and other ages, and when compared to the standards of humility and simplicity in God's Word. We do not have a right to use all the blessings God has given to enrich ourselves. One has said "Extravagance is sin, even if we can afford it."

Excess can be expressed, though, through channels other than extravagance and indulgence. What about working too hard? Is this not intemperance and don't we suffer for it? Doesn't our family suffer when we neglect them? Is this not also an expression of selfishness and pride? Perhaps we think that no one else can do our job as well. We should not think we are indispensable. This does not give license for laziness or idleness. (Here also we could go to excess!) Nor does it prevent us from doing with our might the tasks God has set before us. Paul was willing to "spend and be spent" for his people. But his tireless

work and service was not done at the expense of family and friends. He was spending his energy for others. It does not mean we should not be zealous. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." (Galatians 4:18)

Paul in I Corinthians 9:24-27 compares the Christian race to the race of an athlete. He writes "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." I believe athletes of all times have similar rules. They must not eat too much, drink too much, stay up too late or do anything that would spoil their physical conditioning. They must be temperate. The Apostle continues, "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." We see from this that the Christian race to Paul was of the utmost importance. It was a place for methodical, studious application of every resource; the best use of all his energy. Excess had no place. Temperance was indispensable. How unwise if he should preach the doctrine of salvation to others and then lose in this most important of all races by failure to keep his body and its habits in subjection.

We could take good lessons from some of the older ones among us and even some that have passed on to their reward. The slower age of a half century ago was perhaps a more temperate one--at least in Christian families. Now we are tempted to drive too fast, to spend too much on luxuries, to work too much for more high wages, etc. Much has been written about the inadequacies of our modern diet. We eat too much white sugar, white bread, artificial foods, spices, salt. But most of this problem could be solved simply by following the Bible principle of temperance. The writer of Proverbs says, "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it." (25:16)

One area in which we can indulge is piety and holiness. Seldom, if ever, do we meet one who carries these to excess, and if he does it is with the most profit. I know Ecclesiastes 7:16 says, "Be not righteous over much, neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" But this means a superficial, outward righteousness of the letter. True holiness of heart cannot be overdone. Communion with the Lord Jesus and adoration of our Heavenly Father cannot be in excess. Paul writes in I Timothy 4:15 "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." --L.C.

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS. . ."

One warm summer day, some years ago, as we walked along a lonely little roadway, we were made to stop and gaze in wonderment at a small wisp of dry grass which had grown out of the otherwise barren ground.

All around the little plant were deep, circular grooves, cut in the hard dry soil as smoothly as if done with an instrument of steel.

At first we were puzzled, and wondered what had made such queer markings in the sunbaked earth. Then came the answer with the first gentle breeze which blew. As the little blades and stems were moved to and fro by the wind, they had slowly, but surely, made their mark upon surroundings which appeared to be far too hard and unyielding for such gentle strokes to effect.

As we stood musing over this interesting little scene, we were made to think how this seemingly impossible accomplishment of the fragile little plant somehow resembled the works of the Christian. Jesus has told us that without Him we can do nothing, and Paul the Apostle declared, "I can do ALL THINGS through Christ which strengtheneth me."

This little plant certainly had no power of its own self, yet when motivated by the wind it had done a remarkable thing.

Even so, the Christian, though surrounded by a world hardened in sin, can like the little wisp of grass, make a deep and lasting impression on those with whom he comes in contact, being moved by the Holy Spirit to show forth the love of God to his fellow men.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

—Marvin Crawmer

Long Barn, California
From The Pilgrim, 1961

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE MAN THAT HAD TWO SONS

Matthew 21:28-32

Jesus spoke many parables to the people, and possibly some were never recorded. The dictionary says a parable is usually a fictitious story that illustrates a moral attitude or a religious principle. The disciples asked Jesus one time why He spoke in parables and He answered them, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them (Jews) it is not given."

This parable was the last one spoken before the kingdom was given to the new nation. Although this parable was mainly about the Jews, we can apply it to our lives, as well. At the beginning we are asked to make a judgment. "What think ye?" (What do we think?) The man (father) had two sons. He asked the same thing of both sons--to work in the vineyard. We, as believers, are sons of God and He has asked the same of us through His Word. He has asked us to work in His vineyard--not tomorrow or when it is convenient, but today. We must remember we are bought with a price and are not our own, but the Lord's.

These sons were not young children but were old enough to take responsibility and to work in the vineyard. They were not forced to work and were not asked if they wanted to work, but the father said, "Go work."

This was just as the Lord didn't ask Jonah if he wanted to go to Nineveh, but He said, "Arise, go to Nineveh." (Jonah 1:2)

The first son said he would not go but repented and went. The action was fruit of repentance. We can repent with our mouth but if our actions do not coincide it is not true repentance. The second son did not live up to his word. We read in Ecclesiastes 5:5, "Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

Let us not be slothful but let us labor diligently in our Father's vineyard--and be ready and watching for His glorious return! "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." (Matthew 24:46)

--Albert Ernst
Napannee, Indiana

INSOMNIA?

Some people call it insomnia. It is my time of meditation. I can think clearly and deeply. I can take time to unburden my soul of hidden fears, longings, and dark truths, to free my mind of doubts and problems that float around me, to dream longingly into the future, and to dwell deeply on the mysteries of God and His universe.

My family is asleep. I am alone, lying here in the darkness, tossing restlessly. There is a reason for this. Every person needs time to be alone, time to let his mind tumble back over the good times . . . and the bad. To brood over mistakes that have been made . . . to dream of a better future and of dreams not yet fulfilled. A time to be quiet, to enjoy one's home and family, to drink long and deeply at the Well. This is my time. The time that God has set apart for me. Beside me, my husband breathes gently in his sleep. I am thankful he is a good husband. Also, that he does not snore. The baby heaves a long sigh as she moves about in her crib. Her face looks so peaceful and angelic as I tuck the covers tighter

around her tiny neck.

This silent joy, that lies in my breast, would never be mine if I were asleep now. I'd miss the peace of having this quiet time to myself, relaxing for the sheer joy of comfort. I couldn't revel in this quietness, so soothing after a hectic day.

Suddenly I know I'm richer just by lying here in the dark hearing the night sounds, listening to my family's gentle breathing, hearing the clock ticking away on the mantelpiece, and feeling the warmth our wood stove spreads throughout the house enveloping me.

Yes, I thank you, Lord, for this time You gave me, these precious hours when I couldn't sleep. They weren't wasted. Tomorrow I will be a better wife and mother because of them.

Thank you, Lord, for insomnia.

Selected from Family Life

WHEN I'M AFRAID

Dear Lord, if I could always just be strong
And never falter 'neath the fret of care,
Nor ever be afraid when things go wrong,
Just know that God's strong arm is everywhere.

And if my love was perfect, whole and true
The way the Bible says that it should be,
And if I really, truly trusted You
I know from fear and worry I'd be free.

But sadly, I confess my faith falls slack
So many times from what it ought to be.
So Lord, I ask forgiveness for my lack,
And when I am afraid I'll trust in Thee.

—Vera Miller

Tuolumne, California

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Psalm 56:3

THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH AGAINST WAR

It is a matter of record that the early Christians refused even to bear arms, and that not until 300 years had passed and Christianity was about to become a state religion, was the Christian doctrine perverted to accommodate the ambitions of the ruling powers who desired to turn the population into a huge fighting machine.

The "early fathers" were uniform in their denunciations of war. Origen, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, Cyril, all declared it to be unlawful for Christians to go to war. Justin Martyr in the second century wrote, "The devil is the author of all war," to which both Fabian and Clement gave assent in terms almost identical. Cyprian called it "a pagan custom, repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel." Tertullian wrote, "Our religion teaches that it is better to be killed than to kill," and Lactantius declared, "It can never be lawful for a righteous man to go to war, whose warfare is righteousness itself."

For two whole centuries Christians declined to serve in the army as being an unlawful profession, and Tertullian bears witness that from 170 to 200 A.D. there were no Christians in the Roman Legions. They were called "the followers of peace who used none of the instruments of war." Even as late as 280 A.D. many Roman soldiers, becoming converts to Christianity, left the army. Thus it is clearly shown that not until the Christian Church became an arm of the Roman state was it led to forsake God and the life of faith and become an instrument of deadly strife.

Since that time "Christian war," under the church's sanction, has added to the world's disgrace. To this all history testifies in the Crusades, the inquisitions, the martyrdoms, and the massacres of past centuries, up to the present time of gigantic fleets and armies and bloodsoaked battlefields, with the millions who have perished by consent and approval of the Christian-

ity of our day. The Church, commissioned to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, has preached it with shot and shell and bayonet, and with every available weapon in air, on land and on sea. The law of Cain has usurped the law of Christ, and the Church has lost one of the greatest claims it had upon the hearts and consciences of men, by leading its followers into the acceptance of war as a glorified and sanctified thing, instead of being a sin against God and humanity.

From The Vindicator, April, 1916
Selected by Daniel F. Wolf

GOD EVER CARES

"...He careth for you." (I Peter 5:7)

God ever cares! Not only in life's summer
When skies are bright and days are long and glad.
He cares as much when life is draped in winter,
And heart doth feel bereft, and lone, and sad.

God ever cares! His heart is ever tender!
His love doth never fail nor show decay.
The loves of earth, though strong and deep, may perish;
But His shall never, never pass away.

God ever cares! And thus when life is lonely,
When blessings one time prized are growing dim,
The heart may find a sweet and sunny shelter—
A refuge and a resting place in Him.

God ever cares! And time can never change Him.
His nature is to care, and love, and bless.
And drearest, darkest, emptiest days afford Him
But means to make more sweet His own caress.

—By J. Danson Smith
Selected by Susan R. Coning

HE DIED FOR ME

Was it for me He bowed His head
Upon the cross, and freely shed
His precious blood—that crimson tide,
Was it for me the Saviour died?

It was for me, yes, all for me;
O love of God, so great, so free,
O wondrous love, I'll shout and sing:
He died for me, my Lord and King!

J. Danson Smith

Selected by Marilyn Miller

BAPTISMS

Once more we were made to rejoice with Heaven when two precious souls requested Christian baptism, which was administered Saturday February 21 to Annetta Skiles and Faythe Flora. Also Rhoda Royer was received on a previous baptism.

—Elmer Brovont

COMMUNION NOTICES

The Salida Congregation have agreed, the Lord willing, to hold our spring Love Feast on April 3rd and 4th of this year. A hearty invitation and welcome is extended to members and friends to attend.

—Daniel F. Wolf

We of the Old Brethren Church of Canada, Ohio and Indiana have agreed to hold our Annual Meeting at the Wakarusa meeting house, the Lord willing, on June 4th, 5th and 6th, with Communion service Saturday evening. We wish to extend a hearty invitation to members and friends to be with us at that time.

—Elmer Brovont

HISTORICAL

PHILISTIA

"And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span . . . And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid." (I Samuel 17:4,10-11)

This is a portion of the account of the famous battle between the youth David and the giant Goliath and between the Israelites and Philistines. Because of his faith and trust in God, David was victorious, and the Israelites prevailed against the Philistines that day. The fear that Saul and his men had of Goliath portrays to some extent the power of the Philistines at that time.

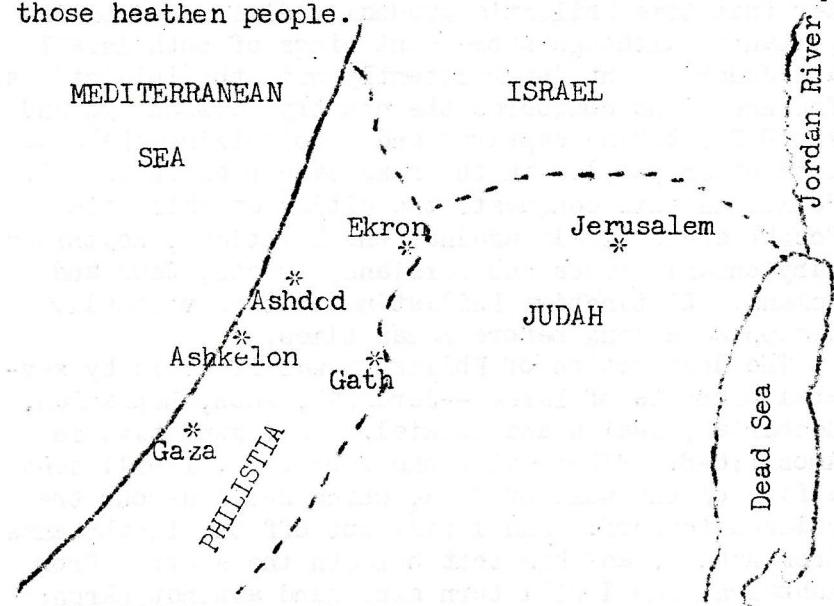
Philistia was composed of a confederation of five cities; these were Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, Ashkelon and Gaza. These cities were located on the coast of Canaan, southwest of Israel and Judah. Their situation was important in that they were located on an important trade route between Egypt and Babylon.

The origin of the Philistine people is uncertain. They were evidently immigrants into Canaan from the land of Captor (see Deuteronomy 2:23 and Jeremiah 47:4), and the location of Captor is not known. Some historians believe the Philistines may have come from the island of Crete; others hold that they migrated from the desert between Egypt and Canaan. Likewise, there is disagreement regarding the type of people they were. Some scholars state they were definitely a Semitic people and others, including Halley, that they were descendants of Ham. The heathen gods they served were Dagon, Ashtoreth and Baal-zebub.

The first reference to the Philistines in the Bible is Genesis 21:32-34, when Abraham apparently lived in the country of Philistia about the time of Isaac's

birth. Exodus 13:17 states that the children of Israel, upon leaving Egypt, were not allowed to go into Philistia because they might become discouraged and turn back rather than fight.

When Joshua led Israel into Canaan and conquered many nations, the "five lords of the Philistines" were among those that remained (see Joshua 13:2-3). These people were certainly a thorn in the flesh to Israel and oppressed them many times. Samson was one of the most famous of the time of the judges who fought against the Philistines. During his lifetime Philistia dominated Israel, and Samson was a formidable enemy of those heathen people.



The Philistines fought against Israel again when Eli was priest at Shiloh and Samuel was his servant. The Israelites took the ark of the covenant with them into battle, and when the Philistines defeated their enemies, they took with the spoil the ark of God. It was then taken to the house of their god Dagon in Ashdod. God showed the Philistines His mighty power by dethroning their god and smiting them with a plague during the seven months the ark was in Ashdod, Gath and Ekron.

Finally the Philistines fearfully sent the ark back to Israel with offerings representing the five lords of the cities of Philistia.

King Saul fought against the Philistines for many years. During the time he was pursuing David to destroy him, battles with the Philistines intervened. Once David fled to Achish, king of Gath, and took refuge for over a year at the city of Ziklag, which Achish gave him. Saul finally met his death on Mount Gilboa in battle with the Philistines.

David fought the Philistines after he became king of Israel and succeeded in subduing the country. After this time Philistia gradually diminished in importance, although subsequent kings of both Israel and Judah fought intermittently with the Philistines. The Assyrians conquered the country between 734 and 700 B.C., taking captives and recolonizing the area with other peoples in the same manner as in Israel. Following this conquest, the cities of Philistia fought successively against the Egyptians, Scythians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Greeks, Jews and Romans. Distinctive Philistine culture virtually disappeared long before Roman times.

The destruction of Philistia was foretold by several prophets of Israel--Jeremiah, Amos, Zephaniah, Zechariah, Isaiah and Ezekiel. Representative is Amos 1:6-8: "Thus saith the Lord . . . I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which shall devour the palaces thereof: And I will cut off the inhabitants from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon, and I will turn mine hand against Ekron: and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord God."

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious knowledge.

--Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

NEWS NOTES

Approximately 10,000 fewer traffic deaths occurred in 1974, probably because U.S. motorists drove less and slower, according to the Department of Transportation. Fatal accidents for 1974 stood at 45,534, compared to 55,084 in 1973, a 17 percent reduction.

—Signs of the Times

Americans spend as much as \$58 million a year on sedatives, tension relievers and stimulants that are available without a prescription at almost any drug store or newsstand.

—Newsweek

The U.S. uses annually 3 million tons of fertilizer on its lawns, golf courses and cemeteries—enough to produce food to keep several million people alive. One ton of fertilizer produces 5 tons of food in this nation. The same amount of fertilizer produces 10 tons of food in developing countries.

—M.C.C. Fact Sheet on Hunger

A juvenile officer blames too much crime on television for an attempted \$1 million extortion plot planned by a group of Dyersburg (Tennessee) boys ranging in age from 10 to 14. The youngsters have been charged with threatening to blow up a Sears Roebuck & Co. store in an attempt to extort \$1 million in cash and about \$100,000 in guns, trucks and farm equipment. "It's not that we felt they could have pulled it off," the officer said. "It's that 12-year-olds could think of it. It's television and nothing else."

Condensed from Modesto Bee (AP)

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

THE LEVITE WHO BECAME AN APOSTLE

The man we want to identify this time is first mentioned in Acts 4 just after the Church was organized. He was a Levite who evidently was converted by the preaching of the Apostles. Like many others, he had land but sold it and brought the money and gave it to the Apostles to use to support the new Church. He became an active worker in the Church.

This man was first sent to Antioch to help in the work there. He then went to Tarsus to find Saul (or Paul) to help also. They both taught for a year in Antioch where the disciples were first called Christians.

In Antioch the Holy Ghost chose this man and Saul to be sent out to spread the Gospel farther. They went to Seleucia, then Cyprus and on to Perga. (You can find these places on a good map.) Always they told the good news of Jesus' resurrection and the grace of God available to sinful men, and many were converted. They went as far as Derbe and Lystra and then returned strengthening the converts and ordaining elders in every Church.

This man preached at Antioch for a time and then sailed to Cyprus with John Mark.

We don't read anymore about this man. He was called an Apostle in Acts 14:14 but, like Paul, was not one of the twelve.

Who was this man?

Find the answer by filling in these blanks:

1. ...And they sent forth _____, that he should go as far as Antioch. (Acts 11:22)
2. For he was a _____ man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of _____: and much people was _____ unto the Lord. (Acts 11:24)
3. What was this man's other name and where was his home? What does his name mean? (Acts 4:36) —L.C.

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"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my Lord, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine;
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore:
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace!
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all! Immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light:
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread,
Jesus, with all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own.
—Charles Wesley

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THE CROSS

There it lay, the heavy cross that had recently held the body of Jesus. The spring grass had been tramped down by the mob, and visible across the countryside were cracks and splits in the rocks and hills, the results of the violent earthquake that opened graves and rent rocks when Jesus died. The awful activity was over and the mob was gone.

Joseph of Arimathaea had boldly petitioned Pilate that he might dispose of the body. Joseph was a man of influence, one of the Jews' council. He was a secret disciple of Jesus and may not have been called to the hasty meeting of the council the night before. At least, he did not consent that Jesus should be condemned the way He was. Pilate granted Joseph permission to take the body. He "took him down" from the cross, and now that tree was no longer needed. The bloody nails, pried out to release His mangled hands and swollen feet, lay as grim reminders of the suffering He had endured and the cruelty of the executioners.

Joseph, being a man of means, had hewn out a tomb for himself to receive his own body when he died. It was in a beautiful setting, a garden, and Joseph no doubt hallowed the spot as a final resting place for himself and his family. But things had changed for Joseph. Somehow this Jesus had made life seem more vital and death less final. Had He not called Lazarus from a rock tomb only a few miles away at Bethany? Had He not proved twice before that He had power over death by raising a little girl and a young man? But now Jesus Himself was dead. Joseph's devotion, secret before, now showed itself openly.

Nicodemus, also a secret disciple of Jesus, came to help bringing "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about

an hundred pound weight." Together they wrapped Jesus' body in fine new linen with the spices "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." A special napkin was wrapped around His head. They laid Jesus in this new rock tomb and "rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre."

The cross had fulfilled its destined purpose. It had held the dying Son of God. Legions of angels would gladly have come to rescue Him from this suffering, shame and death, but how then could the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? From this time on, the cross would have a different meaning for God's people. Before, it was only an instrument of torture where one who fell into disfavor with the ruling powers spent his last agonizing hours. It held only horror and death. It was a place of a curse. Those who hung on a tree were under the curse. For the law said "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." (Galatians 3:13)

But now the cross has become a symbol of salvation. It has become a place where the price was paid for the sins of the world by the suffering Son of God. It has become a meeting place for God and man. It is a meeting place of peace where Creator and creature are reconciled by the One who suffered there.

Now the cross would lose its horror for Jesus' followers. Many would be called upon to follow their Saviour to the death on a cross. Many would be burned on crosses with the flames lighting the revellings and excesses of the Roman ruler and his guests. The cross still remains the instrument of torture and death, but because of Jesus' dying and coming through with victory over the grave, death has lost its horror. Christians can now die in peace and confidence even on a cross.

According to John, Jesus was led to Calvary "bearing his cross." The other accounts say that Simon, a Cyrenian, was compelled to carry the cross. Taking the accounts together we can conclude that Jesus started out with the heavy cross on His own shoulders, but because of His ordeal of scourging, mocking, and loss of sleep, He was unable to carry it all the way

to Calvary. Simon will be remembered for this service to Jesus.

Jesus spoke to His disciples about "bearing the cross" before He went to Calvary. He said "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

We can understand now what this means. The cross can only mean death. To deny ourselves and take up our cross means to do, in some way, what Jesus did. Paul says "I am crucified with Christ . . ." So we can understand that there must be a death in our experience. We must "die" to sin. The "old man" must die. It may not be on a flaming cross as some of the early Christian martyrs literally did. But it must be nonetheless real. But this is not all.

After Jesus' terrible ordeal on the cross and His time in the tomb of Joseph, He was able to take up His life again by the commandment of the Father. His mangled body was given life and He rose from that tomb. This is the reason the cross can now be an instrument of victory instead of death and defeat. We now die with Jesus, but if we do we can also live with Him.

We are now to glory in that old rugged cross. Paul was not one to glory or boast except when he felt compelled to defend his authority to those who seemed to have confidence in the flesh. He wrote to the Romans that boasting was excluded. There is no reason to glory in the flesh. But Paul wrote to the Galatians (6:14), "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

We can and should glory in that cross—not for what it was but for the One who hung upon it. We don't glory in the shameful act of the torture of the Son of God who was sent to rescue fallen man. But we glory in the willingness and ability of Jesus to endure such suffering and by it ransom our souls from certain death. We glory that God found a way to save us when we had no way and no hope.

Yes, we can glory in the cross. And now we sing:

Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?

No, there's a cross for everyone,
And there's a cross for me.

Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow Him. Here is where we break with the world and identify with Jesus. Here is where we die to sin. Let us return again and again to Calvary. Let us see Him there "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (I Peter 2:24)

—L.C.

CROSS OF CHRIST

Cross of Christ, O sacred tree,
 Hide my sins and shelter me;

Claim of merit have I none,
 I am vile and all undone;

I to thee for succor fly,
 Give me refuge or I die;

Cross of Christ, O sacred tree,
 All my hopes are hung on thee.

Cross of Christ, O sacred tree,
 Let me to thy shadow flee;

Here they mocked the Crucified,
 Here the royal sufferer died;

Here was shed the atoning blood,
 Here expired the Son of God;

Cross of Christ, O sacred tree,
 Can the guilty trust in thee?

Cross of Christ, O sacred tree,
 This my boast shall ever be;

That Thy blood for me was shed,
 That for me He groaned and bled;

Now I catch that gracious eye,
 Now I know I shall not die;

Cross of Christ, O sacred tree,
 All my guilt is lost in thee.

By D. T. Taylor

THE CHRISTIAN'S CHARGE

Having heard a message on our responsibility to fear and serve God, I am impressed with some thoughts on the charge or trust that each of us has from the Lord.

There is nobody exempt from this charge, for as a hymn says: "A charge to keep I have, A God to glorify, A never dying soul to save, And fit it for the sky."

Even children have a charge from the Lord: that they "obey their parents in the Lord." Surely children who are willfully disobedient are not pleasing to the Lord.

As we grow older and approach maturity, the Lord shows us our lost condition, and the charge or responsibility for the condition of our soul passes from our parents to us. Young people who willfully live in the pleasures and sin of the world certainly are not keeping the charge the Lord has given them of caring for their souls. They also would be chargeable for the anxiety and grief they cause their loved ones. Their actions and influence may cause some other young person to start down the road to destruction. Young man or woman, can you stand this responsibility? Are you willing to stand in judgment and answer for your influence in the downfall of someone else's soul?

When we realize the lost condition of our soul, our charge is to repent and accept the terms of salvation and to fully yield our way unto the Lord.

We notice that as we go through life our charge continually becomes greater. As most of us approach maturity, we choose an occupation. Do we seek one which is conducive to Christian living? Or is our first consideration high pay, easy labor, or short hours? We have a great responsibility to occupy in something worthwhile and in which we can be a good witness for the Lord.

At maturity, most of us choose a life companion, and here again the charge is greatly increased. We should choose one with whom we can start a Godly home.

Our duty is to influence and continually encourage our companion to a closer walk with God. Certainly being a husband or wife who continually desires more material possessions and conveniences does not fulfill this charge. Rather, we should be content with such things as the Lord blesses us with and seek first the true values.

As time goes on, most of us receive the charge of caring for and training children. This I believe is one of the greatest and most direct charges we can receive in this life. We are now obligated to put forth our very best efforts to train these children to love, honour, fear, and serve our God! There is a popular idea among some plain professing people that it is acceptable and perhaps even expected for young people to indulge in worldly pleasures and amusements and even gross sin before they make a Christian profession. In all frankness I ask, what parents that want their son to grow up to be honest and upright will send him to the Mafia for part of his training? I believe none of us would! Is it any better to allow our children to receive part of their training and develop some of their values of life under the influence and teaching of the Satanic power who is in control of these things? Why would we feel it is acceptable for our children to be part of a system whose ruler is dedicated to the overthrow of all we hold dear?

In bringing up children, our charge is greatly broadened. If we fail to train our children properly, think how much harder we make the job for our brethren whose children will associate with ours! Also, the son or daughter we fail to train properly will likely be someone's life companion. Will they have a Godly home? Will their children be Godly people? Who will be responsible if not? I don't claim that all properly trained children will inevitably become Godly people, but if our children are lost because we neglected our charge as parents, what shall our answers be in that great judgment day?

I have heard some older people state that they were glad when their children were grown and they could

relax and enjoy themselves. I believe someone with this attitude is neglecting their charge. It would seem to me that the charge would be greater as our children mature and start homes of their own. Is it not parents' and grandparents' duty both by actions and advice to influence their children to live a Godly life, avoiding extravagance and the gratification of the flesh? How can older people keep the charge committed to them by living in luxury, idleness, or self-indulgence? Who could better advise their children and lend a helping hand when needed? Who is in a better position to visit the sick, lonely, discouraged, etc.? Who can say how great an influence Godly grandparents can have over their children and grandchildren if they continue to live consistent to the principles they profess?

Most of us will never feel the weight of the charge placed upon the deacons and ministry, but if we do our best to keep the charge the Lord does commit to us, it will make theirs much easier.

The apostle Paul at one place wrote to Timothy to "keep that which is committed to thy trust." "Help me to watch and pray And on thyself rely; Assured if I my trust betray, A second death I'll die." Are we keeping our trust?

Humbly submitted, James Beery
Napanee, Indiana

MARRIAGE

FASSLER—SHIRK: Joseph Fassler and Mary Ann Shirk were united in marriage on May 1 in Modesto, California.

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PARABLES OF JESUS

THE SOWER

The parables may be considered narratives used by Jesus to convey spiritual truths through comparisons. Though Jesus may not be the inventor of parable-type teaching, His use of the method far surpassed that of all other teachers in effectiveness.

This parable, at first thought, seems simple enough because, being recorded also in Mark's and Luke's gospels we have the privilege of having Jesus as the interpreter.

The sower in this parable (Matthew 13:3-3 and 18-23) is not the main point to consider, but it shows a responsibility on the part of every true Christian of handling and receiving the Word of God.

The seed, Jesus says, is God's Word and we wonder if it would accomplish its purpose if there was no one to "sow"!

It seems one of the main points is to show that the effect of the "Word" is dependent on the state of the heart. In some cases this "Word of the Kingdom", whether preached by Christ or His followers, falls on hearts which are pictured by the hard-trodden footpath, which runs through a field of grain. No possible impression can be made. The Word finds no entrance and Satan snatches it away as a bird would pick up grain. "The seeds that fell on stony ground," says the explanation, "is he that heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it." Maybe these are the ones who flock to hear the words of Jesus but retreat when confronted with persecution which the followers of Christ may have to bear.

Then there are those hearers who are compared to seed which falls among thorns. It germinates but has no room for developments. These hearers seem so pre-occupied by worldly interests that they bear no spiritual fruit.

Finally it ends with hope and promise: "Other seeds fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold." This, says the explanation, is the situation of him who hears the Word and understands it.

The preparation of the soil is our responsibility and we are too often willing to leave it half done. It takes work and pains to keep our spirits in a receptive mood for the Word.

To understand the nature of the seed means to accept its tremendous possibilities. It means to believe that it can give strength to our feeble purposes and grant us power to live by. If we will receive it humbly and confidently, what it will do in one poor life is beyond our ability to describe. We believe that every one of us has a potential, far beyond anything yet realized. Men and women are at their best when the Gospel gets down deep into their hearts!

In conclusion we should all take heed how we hear the Gospel message. It is also an encouragement to those who proclaim "the Good News". Obviously, not all hearers will be eager for the message, nor even some who accept it prove true to Christ. However, we can and must believe that if we faithfully perform our tasks, the Lord of the Harvest will produce results which will bring an infinite reward.

God has done what we cannot do. He will not do what we can!

--Roger L. Skiles
Wakarusa, Indiana

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

We of the Old Brethren Church of Canada, Ohio and Indiana have agreed to hold our Annual Meeting at the Wakarusa meeting house, the Lord willing, on June 4th, 5th and 6th, with Communion service Saturday evening. We wish to extend a hearty invitation to members and friends to be with us at that time.

—Elmer Brovont

THOSE WEEDS

Our new garden is showing a mass of fine weeds which can easily be destroyed by a few strokes of the hoe. However, if we wait a few weeks, they'll be hard to pull out, and, if not uprooted, they'll ruin the good things we've planted. A garden free of weeds is a joy to behold.

In my own life I find little irritations, grudges and distrust cropping out. If let to grow, soon sharp words which hurt both myself and my dear ones ruin the precious fruits of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance..."

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;"
(I Corinthians 13:4,5)

—Martha Cover

DARKNESS

Dark shadows played across the beams
In the room where the Baby lay,
And in the world a darker force
Could scarce be held at bay.
Above Him darkness in the sky
As He hung on the cross alone,
And darker still inside the tomb
When they closed it with a stone.
There was darkness in the hearts of men
Where evil held full sway
Until He lifted up His light
And drove all dark away.

By Willa Phillips
Selected by Susie Wagner

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." —John 20:31

HISTORICAL

EGYPT

Egypt is one of the oldest civilizations of the world. According to Halley, it was founded soon after the flood by Mizraim, the son of Ham and was called the "Land of Ham". Ancient history reveals a very colorful civilization centered around the Nile River.

Egypt is situated on the northeastern corner of Africa, about 300 miles southwest of Jerusalem. It consists of a valley about 750 miles long and 2 to 30 miles wide, bisected from north to south by the Nile River. It is surrounded almost entirely by desert. The most fertile part of the country is the Delta, at the mouth of the Nile.

Without the Nile River, Egyptian culture would not have existed as it did. The Nile, which overflowed its banks annually to irrigate and enrich the soil adjacent to it, was literally the giver of life to Egypt.

Egypt was ruled by kings called Pharaohs beginning with Menes, who united Upper and Lower Egypt and was the first ruler known to history. He founded the first of thirty-one dynasties which controlled Egypt until the time of Alexander the Great.

There were three outstanding periods in ancient Egyptian history. First was the Old Kingdom, when many of the great pyramids were built. Second was the Middle kingdom, about 2000 B.C., at the time of Abraham. Third was the Empire period, about 1600 to 1200 B.C. During this time, Egypt, the first world empire, controlled the area from Ethiopia to the Euphrates River. This was also the time when the children of Israel journeyed to Egypt to escape the famine and were enslaved there 400 years.

The history of God's people related in the Old Testament is closely bound to that of Egypt. Abraham and Sarah lived in Egypt for a time. Then Joseph was sold into slavery and taken to Egypt, where he

eventually became ruler next in line to Pharaoh. During the time of the seven year famine, Jacob and his 66 descendants, at Joseph's request, went from Canaan to Egypt to live there. While in Egypt, the children of Israel were eventually enslaved by the dynasty of Pharaohs following the one under which Joseph served. The Israelites remained in bondage until God delivered them through Moses.

At the time of Moses' birth, Pharaoh ordered all male children born to the Israelites cast into the river in an attempt to curb the rapidly growing population of the Hebrews. However, in the providence of God, Moses was rescued by the Pharaoh's daughter, and she adopted him. She allowed him to spend at least part of his childhood with his people, during which time he learned much about the God of his fathers--enough to make him choose to serve God rather than to possibly become the ruler of the greatest nation on earth at that time.

The Egyptians served many gods, most of which were represented by animals. These included Ptah, a bull; Osiris, a goat; Amon, a cow; Thoth, an ape; Heka, a frog; and Ra, the sun god, a hawk. The Nile was also worshipped. The ten plagues Moses performed through the power of God were intended to show His supremacy and were aimed at Egyptian deities.

By the time of the death of the firstborn throughout Egypt, when Pharaoh finally released the children of Israel, Egypt was a changed country. Gone were all its cattle and crops from the plagues. Gone was much of its wealth as the Israelites "borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment . . . And they spoiled the Egyptians." (Exodus 12:35-36) Perhaps most important of all, gone was the nation of slaves which had served Egypt for 400 years and built royal cities for the Pharaohs. All this was a tremendous blow to Egypt's economy and was instrumental in changing the country from a world empire to a second rate nation.

From the time of Joshua until the captivity, Egypt alternately fought and made peace with Israel, Judah,

and the surrounding nations. Egypt also fought against both Assyria and Babylon and was bitterly defeated by the latter at the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C. With the fall of Babylon, the Persians conquered Egypt and ruled there until the Egyptians, after several rebellions, finally succeeded in throwing off the Persian yoke in 405 B.C. Sixty years later Persia reconquered the area, only to be replaced by Alexander of Greece in 332 B.C. Following his death, Egypt was ruled by the Ptolemies until 30 B.C., when Rome took control of the nation.

Thus we see that Egypt's history is checkered with wars and struggles for supremacy not only internally but also internationally. Much of this was prophesied by Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekial. Also prophesied was the acceptance of the God of Israel by Egypt (Isaiah 19:18-25). This came to pass when many Jews made their home in Egypt after the captivity and spread their influence throughout the area. Also, the Gospel of Jesus was widely accepted in Alexandria and other Egyptian cities in the first few centuries after Christ.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, and Encyclopaedia Britannica.

—Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

Before the dawn of Easter
There came Gethsemane...
Before the Resurrection
There were hours of agony...
For there can be no crown of stars
Without a cross to bear,
And there is no Salvation
Without faith and love and prayer.
And when we take our needs to God,
Let us pray as did His Son
That dark night in Gethsemane,
"Thy will, not mine, be done."

By Helen Steiner Rice Selected by Leona Miller

~~WORLDVIEW & NEWS NOTES~~

We notice different ones are advocating that we write to our congressmen to vote on a bill pending concerning the right of authorities to take away children from their parents. The stories conflict somewhat, and to what extent this would be done is not clear. Also, as in some other laws, some will depend on the men that enforce the law. Some over-zealous men might abuse the intent of the law. We are not in favour of such laws, and one of the hardest things for any Christian parents would be to see their children taken away and taught to believe that there is no God. But to go to law or try to tell our government what we do or do not want is not in our jurisdiction. We had better do as Daniel in the Bible did. He, being one of the king's chief rulers must surely have known the conspiracy that was plotted against him. But we do not read that he made any attempt to stop them. We do read that he prayed and had faith in God. Now, if we have faith as Daniel did and find favour with God as he did, I'm sure God will take care of the government. He will, as the Scripture says, "turn the king's (congressmen's) heart as he listeth." If they pass a law contrary to His will and we are worthy of His protection, He will have a way for our escape, and the law will backfire against them. There is something that bothers me more than the fear that we will suffer persecution and we or our children will be deprived to worship God. It is the way our people are drifting into the world and losing our faith by default. By David E. Miller in Jan. 1976 Budget

Selected by Amos Baker

There should be 4 billion people on Earth by Sunday (March 28, 1976) according to a new estimate from the Population Reference Bureau. That milestone comes a year later than some had predicted, but it still means the world's population will have taken only 15 years to add a billion to its numbers.

—Union Democrat (Sonora, Calif.)

THE RULER WHO "ALMOST" BECAME A CHRISTIAN
(Acts 25 & 26)

The man we describe this time was a king under the Caesar of the Roman government. We remember him because Paul appeared before him and preached the Gospel to him and his wife.

This king and his wife came to Caesarea to visit the local ruler, Festus. Paul was in prison, and Festus wasn't sure what to do with him because he had done nothing wrong. The Jews had brought false charges against him.

When this ruler came to Caesarea and Festus told him about Paul, he wanted to hear Paul speak. So Festus commanded to bring Paul out. Paul gladly made his defence before this king because Paul knew he was expert in the "customs and questions which were among the Jews." Paul told how he, too, at first persecuted the Christians until Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, struck him blind and told him he was fighting against God. He told the king that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision but began to preach repentance and turning to God. He told the king about Jesus coming to fulfill the prophecies and suffering and dying and then being the first to rise from the dead. He asked this king, "Do you believe the prophets? I know you believe." Then this proud king replied, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul wished it could be true, but "almost" is not enough.

The king would have released Paul, but he had already appealed to Ceasar so he must be sent to Rome.

Who was this king?

Fill in the blanks to find the answer.

1. Then _____ said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. (Acts 26:1)
2. For which hope's sake, _____, I am accused of the Jews. (Acts 26:7) —L.C.

THE PILGRIM

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"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

THE COMFORTER HAS COME

O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found,
Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;
Let every Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound:
The Comforter has come!

The long, long night is past; the morning breaks at last,
And hushed the dreadful wail and fury of the blast,
As o'er the golden hills the day advances fast!
The Comforter has come!

Lo, the great King of kings, with healing in His wings,
To every captive soul a full deliverance brings,
And through the vacant cells the song of triumph rings,
The Comforter has come!

O boundless love divine! how shall this tongue of mine
To wondering mortals tell the matchless grace divine
That I, a child of sin, should in His image shine!
The Comforter has come!

The Comforter has come, The Comforter has come!
The Holy Ghost from Heaven, The Father's promise given;
O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found--
The Comforter has come!

—Frank Bottome, 1823-1894

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SPEAKING WITH "TONGUES"

The following is adapted from a letter written some time ago by the author to a sister asking for information and comments on the current "tongues" movement.

I have not had extensive contact with the tongues people, but what I have had, and what I read of their literature, it seems to me that they are trying to convince themselves and others that speaking with "tongues" is the sole evidence of possession of the Holy Spirit. I do not feel compelled to believe all the testimonies and claims that this is the same experience as recorded in the New Testament of those who spoke in "tongues". Neither do I wish to say that there could not be such an experience in this age. But I think that any claim to such an experience would have to be in accordance with New Testament teaching of Jesus and His apostles.

There are three instances recorded in the New Testament where those who received the baptism of the Holy Ghost spake with tongues: Acts 2:2-13; 10:44-46; and 19:6. And, as pointed out by one writer on this subject, the manifestations were different in each case as was consistent with the need of the occasion. In Acts 2 they spoke in about 18 other known languages (or at least the hearers heard them in their own native language wherein they were born) and extolled "the wonderful works of God." But in Acts 10 there is no reason to think that they spoke in more than one language which they all understood, for it is said they "heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." And in Acts 19 they "spake with tongues and prophesied." No mention is made in any of these cases of the need of an interpreter. But there are many other instances of conversions and baptisms where there is no indication that they spake with "tongues". All of

the above instances that occurred were spontaneous, without prior announcement or expectation of those on whom it occurred.

But in the case of the Corinthians (which is the only occasion that I am aware of where there were any instructions regulating and restricting it), speaking with tongues is listed as but one of the gifts of the Spirit, and it is at the bottom of the list of those gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-10). And in chapter 14 the apostle says that "Prophesying is greater" (verse 5) and he further says in verse 19 of the 14th chapter that he would 2000 times rather speak in a voice that could be understood than to speak in an "unknown tongue".

The book of I Corinthians shows clearly that there was great rivalry among them, and it appears that they thought just like the "tongues" people today that speaking in tongues was the highest proof and function of the possession of the Holy Spirit. But I think it is just as clear that Paul is telling them that this is not true; or that they have some mistaken ideas about "tongues".

I think it is most important, in considering this subject, to pay strict attention to what Jesus said would be the office and function of the promised Holy Ghost in the person and life of the believer who would be converted and joined to Him in His appointed way.

In chapters 14, 15, and 16 of St. John Jesus told His apostles that the mission of the Holy Ghost, whom, said He, the Father will send unto you in my name, would be: the "Spirit of truth"; a "Comforter" unto them; He would "Abide in them forever!" "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26) "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." (John 15:26) "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin,

because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged . . . Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:8-14)

In none of these manifestations of the Holy Ghost in the believers is any mention of "tongues", unless it may be included in verse 14, where it says, "He shall glorify me." And I am inclined to believe that this is the true meaning of speaking in tongues. On the day of Pentecost when they were heard in all those different languages, they were telling "The wonderful works of God." And those who heard them knew what they were saying. The same was true in Cornelius' house (Acts 10:46); they understood what they were saying, for "they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God." Apparently they spoke in the one language which they all understood, for there is no mention of the need of an interpreter. Also at Ephesus, "When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." (Acts 19:6)

Keeping all this in mind and remembering that Paul's letter to the Corinthians was a corrective letter, and knowing all the other errors into which they had fallen, it seems quite possible (and even probable) that they had acquired some mistaken ideas regarding the use of "tongues". At any rate he tells them that it is far greater and more useful to "prophesy" than to speak with tongues.

In conclusion, it seems that we ought yet to mention what the apostle Paul says are the fruits of the Spirit: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the

Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Galatians 5:22-26)

--Daniel F. Wolf

Modesto, California

WELLS OF WATER

This is a dry year for our area. Winter rainfall was the lowest for many years, and now as summer begins, the land cries out for water and in places there is not enough. It will be a test for the many wells as people pump more to keep trees and plants from drying out. It is sad to see grass and vegetation become weak and dry for lack of water. Water is vital and it takes a dry spell to make us appreciate it.

The apostle Peter uses the expression "wells without water" to partly describe the hypocrites that were actively working against the Church in his day. These people seemed to pose as Christians (perhaps even had been Christians at one time,) but had none of the characteristics that mark Christians. Peter calls them spots and blemishes "sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you." (II Peter 2:13) According to the last part of this same chapter, these men were deceivers of those who had been converted.

This description "wells without water" tells us something about those deceivers. A well is supposed to have water. Otherwise it does not serve the very purpose for which it was dug. It is like salt that has lost its savour. Without water a well is a useless hole, failing to produce water for the dry land around it and the thirsty travellers. A dry well even becomes a trap for the unwary to fall into, and it seems that this was the way these evil men were. They not only failed to fulfill the purpose for which they were created and called but they became traps to deceive the unwary and weak.

Jude further describes the same class. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots." (Jude 12)

On the contrary, Christians are compared to wells of water. Jesus said, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14) He also said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37,38) The writer, John, explains that He spake this of the Spirit "which they that believe on him should receive."

How vital is this water! It first quenches our thirst and then overflows to become a river to supply the thirsty around us. How important it is that we be yielded to God that we can be this kind of well—full and overflowing.

Yes, we live in a dry land. There is only one source for the life-giving water: it comes from above and supplies the wells that will be used of God. Let us drink deep of the life-giving Spirit of God and Word of God. Let us be wells full of water—overflowing wells. Let us pray for the latter rains, the showers of blessings, the times of refreshing. Paul writes (Ephesians 5:18), "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." It is a choice open to us. Invite Him to come in and He will fill you to overflowing. —L.C.

And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

—Psalms 1:3,4

PARABLES OF JESUS

WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS

Matthew 7:24-27

Jesus went up into a mountain to teach his disciples. While He was teaching there He spoke the parable of the Builders. Christ ended His teaching that day by saying (Matthew 7:24-27), "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

The Apostle Paul in I Corinthians says, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This makes it very plain that our building is either founded upon the Rock or on the sand. How important this parable must be to each brother and sister as we journey through this life. May all of us, as Children of God, feel a need to qualify our words and deeds so they will always be founded on the Rock.

I have thought many times of how, when a carpenter builds a building, he must first build a solid foundation. This is very important, for without a strong foundation the building will not stand. It may not fall right away, but as the wind and rains come it will surely fall. To a builder or carpenter it is sad to see a building that has fallen because its foundation was weak.

When we compare the natural building and spiritual building they are similar. God, the Master builder must surely be saddened to see so many buildings being destroyed by the cares and trials of this life. May we always try to follow the Lord Jesus Christ as we

THE PILGRIM

construct our spiritual building. And not of wood, hay, and stubble, but of those things which will reap Life Eternal.

As Paul says in I Timothy 6:19, "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." What a wonderful promise that each of us has claim to if we stay on that Rock, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus spoke these words to Peter explaining to him about who He really was and His mission here on the earth. May our prayer be that we may be a part of the church which the gates of hell shall not prevail against.

--Buford Flora
Mt. Olive, Mississippi

May 23, 1976

Rio Verde, Goias, Brazil, S.A.

To all of the dear brethren and sisters in North America,

We greet you all in the Blessed Name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior and trust this finds each of you enjoying the many blessings of God.

The five of us down here are fine and well blessed way beyond our deservings.

Here it is six months since we gave most of you the parting hand, and one year since giving the rest of you the parting hand. In some ways it seems a long time since seeing any of you, and in other ways the last year vanished quickly, as it was such a busy year. We encountered what we thought were a few small adversities along the way, but in the end they turned out to be blessings in disguise. All we needed was a little patience, as God was taking care of things and knew the end from the beginning, which we couldn't see.

We attended Holdeman Mennonite services this morning. John Penner preached on faithfulness, our responsibility as parents and children, and being faithful in the little things. He read from St. Luke, Timothy, and Revelation.

We usually attend the Holdeman Mennonite or German Baptist services. A few Sundays we worshipped at home by ourselves. We thank God for our good Christian neighbors. They have been a great help to us.

The Brazilian people seem to be a slow, easy going people, very friendly and peace loving, and exceptionally hospitable. I think Reno Hibner said it well in his sermon one Sunday when he said, "We North Americans have a lot to learn from our Brazilian neighbors when it comes to hospitality."

The majority of the Brazilians came from Portugal. They are some lighter in color than the Spaniards and Mexicans (a light tan). There are some native Indians and also Negroes. The Negroes were brought over here from Africa as slaves years ago. There are whites here from Germany, Russia, Greece, North America, and other countries. There are also Jews, Arabs, Syrians and Lebanese, which are brown skinned.

The majority of the Brazilian farmers farm with a horse, axe and hoe. Also, we occasionally see an ox cart being pulled by a yoke of oxen. These farm families live mainly in stick houses, with thatch roofs made of palm leaves. Some live in brick stuccoed houses with tile roofs. The larger Brazilian farmers have tractors, combines, and modern equipment and live in town. They hire help to do their farm work.

Brazil has a lot of cattle, which consist mostly of Brahmans. This means there are quite a few cowboys here also. The old Goias-Sao Paulo road goes along the southwest corner of our farm, and we have seen a lot of cattle drives go through, consisting of anywhere from one hundred to several hundred cattle each. Most of these cattle are being driven south to Sao Paulo for slaughter. Sao Paulo is six hundred miles south of here.

The main dishes of the Brazilian diet are rice, beans, and coffee. Then there is plenty of meat, milk, eggs, fish, citrus fruit, bananas, pineapple, coconut, tomatoes, potatoes, melons, squash, etc.

Last Tuesday morning Brent, Ted and I drove about twelve miles south of here to the Nelson Barros residence to look at his cattle he had for sale. Most of the way the road was just two worn paths through a large open field. The area consists of smaller Brazilian farmers living along a stream and the Rio Verdhino (river). Their form of transportation is by foot, horse back, horse and cart, or by bicycle. As we drove down the gradual slope toward the stream, Nelson's house came into view. It is a typical Brazilian house made of stick sides and a thatched roof. As we get into the building area we see his stick pig pen and a thatched roof shed containing his horse cart, saddles, livestock salt, etc. It is now ten o'clock and Nelson is at the corral with his cattle. They take turns eating salt out of his hand and are just as tame as kittens.

The boys played together with Nelson's three small children in front of the house in the sand. Their toys consisted of sticks and a wooden mallet.

Nelson showed me the cattle and his two horses, and we conversed awhile. He then invited us into the house for lunch which we gratefully accepted. We went in through the living room to the kitchen. Nelson gave us each a dish and fork. We then served ourselves cafeteria style. The menu was rice, beans, chicken, and coffee. We sat in the living room on wooden benches with stick legs and no lean backs, and held our dishes to eat lunch. They have no table for dining. Nelson and his family served themselves and ate with us. We went back to the kitchen for refills and all had plenty to eat.

The house has two exterior doors and four rooms consisting of a living room, kitchen and two bedrooms. They use poles to set in the door openings to close them at night and when they are away from home. The house floor is clean swept dirt.

Following lunch and limited conversation, Nelson and I finished our business. The language barrier makes for the limited conversation. Nelson doesn't speak English and I speak and understand very little Portuguese. We got along fine but it just takes lots of time without an interpreter.

We then left Nelson's at one o'clock in the afternoon. Brent and Ted had a lot to talk about, as that was the first meal they had eaten at a Brazilian's house. We all thoroughly enjoyed it.

(to be continued next issue)

LOVE, A-FLOWING

Walk into a little room.
There's a candle glowing.
Is the room all filled with gloom?
No, there's a light a-flowing.

Walk into a church house.
Is Christ's love a-glowing?
Or is the room all filled with gloom
With hate and spite a-flowing?

Hide a candle under a bushel,
And soon it will go out.
Hide Christ's love from all to see,
And soon your light is out.

Give your neighbor a kindly-spoken word,
And soon there's love a-flowing.
Give your friend a harsh-spoken word,
And soon the hate comes rolling.

Is your love shown to all?
Or is it in a bushel hid?
Show Christ's love to one and all,
And soon there's love a-flowing.

By Mary Alice Skiles
Cuba, New Mexico

ELECTIONS

On June 4, 1976 the Indiana, Ohio and Canada members held a special council. Brother Hollis Flora was advanced to the second degree of the ministry, and Brother Claude Boone was elected to the ministry. May they and their companions have the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their new duties.

—Elmer Brovont

BIRTHS

BRUBAKER - A daughter, Anna Lorraine, born April 1 to Stanley and Janice Brubaker of Nappanee, Indiana.

FLORA - A daughter, Cheryl Ann, born March 11 and received for adoption April 15 by Wade and Violet Flora of Goias, Brazil, S.A.

ROYER - A son, Jcel Michael, born May 31 to Timothy and Linda Royer of Goshen, Indiana.

COVER - A son, Joseph Willis, born June 23 to Joseph W. and Sherry Cover of Tuolumne, California.

ADDRESS CHANGES

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HISTORICAL

ATHENS

Athens, the capital city of Greece, has been in existence for thousands of years. It is situated on the southern end of the plain of Attica in southeastern Greece. The origin of the city is not known, but archaeologists believe the earliest settlement began at the Acropolis, a rocky plateau over 500 feet high. This plateau provided a natural defense against invaders.

West of the Acropolis in ancient Athens stood a lower rocky hill known as the Areopagus, or Mars' Hill. This was the seat of the old oligarchical council and the site of an altar to the goddess Athena. Also on Mars' Hill were two stones where the accuser and accused stood during a trial.

North of the Areopagus was the Agora, or market-place. Here was the center of commercial and civil life. In the marketplace were many public buildings which housed offices of administration.

Athens has a very colorful history. It was famous throughout the ancient world as a center of culture and learning. Its achievements in philosophy, literature, science and art were possibly unparalleled anywhere else. It was also the first city to be governed for a time by a democratic system.

Athens was famous for its outstanding architecture. During several centuries before Christ, some of its rulers directed considerable energy toward making their city beautiful. Among these were the Peisistratids, a family of autocrats who ruled Athens from 560 to 511 B.C. Cleisthenes followed these despots and founded Athenian democracy. Then the Persians invaded the city, destroying much of it. Themistocles was instrumental in driving out the Persians and rebuilding the city wall. Pericles (443-429 B.C.) then ruled Athens during its golden age, when it was the foremost city of ancient Greece. It was he who commissioned

the building of the Parthenon, the famous temple of Athena situated on the Acropolis. Pericles also developed democracy to its fullest extent.

After the brilliant rule of Pericles came the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.), and Athens was bitterly defeated by Sparta. This was followed by the Macedonian period, when Philip of Macedon (359-336 B.C.) conquered the city and his son, Alexander the Great, ruled after him. In 146 B.C. Greece became a province of Rome. With a few exceptions, Athens prospered under Roman rule and regained some of its former glory.

At the time of the Apostle Paul Rome ruled the world. Many temples to various idols stood on the Acropolis and also throughout the city of Athens. The Athenians were, as Paul stated, a superstitious people. They had in their city the most famous university in the ancient world and had traditions and learning passed down to them by many great philosophers--Plato, Sophocles and others. Even famous men from Rome, including Cicero and Horace, came to Athens to attend its philosophical schools. Thus, there were in Athens many seeking the answers to life, and it was to this setting that Paul came.

When Paul reached Athens he went first to the synagogue of the Jews (Acts 17:17), as was his custom, and "in the market daily with those that met with him." It was at the marketplace that he encountered many students of philosophy, including the Stoics and Epicureans. It is interesting to note that these two schools of thought were in direct opposition to each other--the Epicureans believed that the goal of life is pleasure and happiness, and the Stoics held that man should passively accept all the happenings of life.

Paul attracted enough attention with his discussions among the philosophers that they took him to the Areopagus to be heard by the court. Paul then used their idolatry as a starting point to declare to the Athenians the truth about the one true God. Some were greatly impressed with his remarks, some ridiculed him, and some were converted.

After the decline of the Roman Empire Greece was ruled by the Byzantine Empire, during which time it suffered greatly. In 1204 A.D. the Latins conquered Constantinople and ruled former Byzantine territory until 1458, when the Turks became sovereign. Turkish rule lasted until 1833; then the Greeks revolted in the Greek War of Independence. Shortly after the victory over the Turks, Athens was declared the capital city of Greece due to its prominence in history.

After reviewing the history of the famous city of Athens which has been so glorified in the past, one could certainly say with the hymn writer,

Oh where are kings and empires now,

Of old that went and came?

The church of Christ is praying yet,

A thousand years the same.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

--Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

NEWS NOTES

Last year 250 million babies were born to non-Christian parents. Close to 125,000 people died every day. Of those who died, over 100,000 passed on without knowing about the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

—Signs of the Times

Federal investigators note that more than \$100 million worth of goods is stolen annually by fraudulent use of credit cards; more than \$450 million in bad checks is passed at grocery stores alone; \$3 billion to \$10 billion is sent out of the country by aliens working here illegally, and \$100 million in taxes is avoided by the same aliens; and millions of dollars' worth of drugs are smuggled into the country by persons carrying false passports. —Newsweek

CHILDREN'S PAGE

THE WISE PHARISEE (Acts 5 and 22:3)

Our character to identify this time is a Pharisee. He was a doctor of the law and had a good reputation for his wisdom and understanding. He was one of the best teachers of the law in his day, and might even have been one of the doctors that Jesus questioned and gave answers to when He was twelve years old.

This Pharisee was a member of the council at Jerusalem. When Jesus' disciples began to preach His word after the Holy Spirit came upon them, the Pharisees tried to stop them. Once they put the apostles in prison, but God opened the prison doors and let them out and told them to "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." The soldiers found them there and brought them before this high council. Some of the officials were ready to slay them, but this wise Pharisee told them of other examples when men rose up to start new movements and how they failed. He advised them to let the apostles alone and let their movement either stand approved of God or fail.

The council decided to take this advice. But first they called the apostles and beat them, commanded them not to speak anymore in the name of Jesus and let them go. The apostles left and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus and continued to obey God and preach the word.

We don't read that this Pharisee ever was converted to follow Jesus. Perhaps the most famous of his pupils was the apostle Paul.

What was this man's name?

Find the answer in this first scripture:

1. Then stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named _____, a doctor of the law... Acts 5:34
2. But if it be of _____, ye cannot _____ it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Acts 5:39

--L.C.

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"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

THIS IS THE TRUE GOD

The Maker of the universe
As man, for man was made a curse,
The claims of law which He had made
Unto the uttermost He paid.

His holy fingers made the bough
Which grew the thorns that crowned His brow,
The nails that pierced His hands were mined
In secret places He designed.

He made the forest whence there sprung
The tree on which His body hung.
He died upon a cross of wood,
Yet made the hill on which it stood.

The sky that darkened o'er His head,
By Him above the earth was spread.
The sun that hid from Him its face,
By His decree was poised in space.

The spear which spilled His precious blood
Was tempered in the fires of God.
The grave in which His form was laid
Was hewn in rocks His hands had made.

The throne on which He now appears
Was His from everlasting years,
But a new glory crowns His brow,
And every knee to Him shall bow.

—F. W. Pitt

Missionary to India
London, England

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YE ALSO OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET

It has repeatedly and again recently come to this writer's attention that certain apparently sincere Christians disregard the footwashing service of St. John 13, claiming that any humble act of service to one's fellow man fulfills the intent of this chapter, or, in other words, the example given by our Lord in St. John 13 was not intended to be observed literally or as an ordinance by the Church.

We hold this position to be erroneous. We believe it was our Lord's intent that the members of His Church should wash one another's feet. We believe further that the Church has observed this practice ever since it was instituted in the upper room by the Lord Jesus Christ and that it will continue to do so until He comes again. We wish herewith to present some reasons why we believe this.

First of all, we feel that no ordinance in the New Testament is more clearly presented nor obedience more definitely commanded than the ordinance of feetwashing in St. John 13. And there is a penalty attached for failure to obey, a penalty which, if incurred, would render one's entire Christian profession futile and useless.

According to Matthew 28:20 believers are to be taught to observe all things that Jesus commanded His apostles. Surely footwashing is one of these "all things".

We believe every earnest seeker after truth will agree that even if there were no mention whatever in the Bible of footwashing it would still be the Christian's duty to do good and perform acts of service to his fellow man as opportunity might present itself. An abundance of texts might be mentioned in

support of this position but we believe they are all briefly comprehended in this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This being the case, it would seem superfluous for our Lord to have troubled Himself with teaching, by word and example, something which He did not intend to be observed and this during His last hour with His disciples before the crucifixion.

I once met a man who was very aggressive with his verbal Christian testimony but did not think he needed to wash feet. I asked him why not and his answer was that Paul did not expound on it. This did not make sense to me because Paul's Lord certainly taught foot-washing, and according to I Timothy 5:10 Paul did recognize footwashing as an ordinance to be observed by the assembly. Why should it be thought needful for Paul to expound on a subject that had been presented in such a simple, direct, and easily understood manner as footwashing is in St. John 13?

Kind friend, if you are one of those who has not accepted footwashing, consider: If Jesus would not excuse an apostle (Peter) from this humble service, why do you think He would excuse you? Might it be with you as it was with Naaman when his servants asked him, "If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?" (II Kings 5:13)

--Harold Royer
Goshen, Indiana

Love consecrates the humblest act,
And sanctifies each deed,
It sheds a benediction sweet,
And hallows every need.

When in the shadow of the cross,
Christ bowed and washed the feet
Of His disciples, 'twas a sign
Of His great love complete.

S. B. McManus, 1902

CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

This year of the United States Bicentennial, and particularly this month, we hear a lot about patriotism and supporting our country and honoring its founders. This is praiseworthy from the standpoint of a citizen whose hopes are centered in this life. However, for us who profess to be citizens of the Heavenly Country and strangers and pilgrims here, our emphasis and our attitudes should be different. We should be thankful for our freedom and good government. But our first concern should be to honor our Founder--the one who gave His life for His people--not on a battlefield but on a shameful cross.

The best citizens of this country are those who are willing to spend time, effort, and money in the service and support of their government. They obey the laws; they help in electing officials and take up arms to defend the country. They practice and protect the principles for which the government stands.

The child of God also has duty to be loyal to his Country and his King. Being a citizen of the Kingdom of God, he is under higher laws and better government. He has an even higher obligation to obey the laws of the Kingdom and support its principles. When we are born into the family of God, we are to take on His ways and walk in His will. What better way can we live in honor to God than to strive to be like Him?

As we make these comparisons, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that many citizens of this earthly country are more zealous and devoted in their way than many of us who profess citizenship in the Heavenly Country. Considering the promises of God and the issues of everlasting life or death, this should not be the case. We don't need to compare ourselves to citizens here to know that God has called us to holiness and purity, to self denial and zeal for His cause. His Word tells us this, and the fact that Jesus died to atone for our sins shows us the importance of our Christian walk here.

One of the greatest needs of the modern day Church is a return to holiness of life and pious practice of Christian virtue. In Leviticus 11:44 God told the Israelites "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy . . ." This was said in reference to clean and unclean foods and avoiding defilement of unclean vessels and carcases. It was about their daily lives. Holiness means right living in the details of everyday life as well as prayer and praise and worship. Man is not holy by nature. We need the motivation and continued help of the Holy Spirit. But the sad part is that, although the Lord has promised freely to give us His help, we so often fail to take advantage of it and grow lax in holiness.

Part of the reason for this lack is the deceptive character of the times in which we live. Someone has said that our time is an age of inquiry without conviction and of interest without commitment. Men, through ever-developing technology, probe into the mysteries of the earth and the universe. But the quest is without real benefit. Scientists discover facts of creation but fail to give credit to the Creator. They learn unfailing laws in nature but fail to honor the unfailing law giver. Without doubt these are the "perilous times" of the "last days". Paul wrote about in II Timothy 3. For he described the people as "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Christians can be influenced by this lack of conviction and obligation. It makes us lukewarm. We can begin to think that it is possible to have knowledge of the things of God and confess them without letting them influence us or change our lives too much. One of the principles of the Pietists of Germany (spiritual ancestors of the Brethren) was that the indispensable result of the knowledge of God must be a Godly life. No one could claim to know God and not practice His ways. Jesus said "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

(Luke 6:46) He also said several times in various ways "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15,21,23)

Without holiness and pious living, a profession of Christianity is empty. Our conduct has a way of showing through and overriding any profession we might make. One has said, "Your actions speak so loud, I can't hear what you say."

How can we effectively improve in godliness or return to it if we have become careless? How can we be better citizens of that Heavenly Kingdom of God? First, we must remember that without the Lord we can do nothing. It is God that supplies the power, but we must be willing. It is not enough to say we are helpless so we need not try but sit back and wait for something to happen. God helps us by inspiring us to move and act. I like the verse of one of our hymns:

And every virtue we possess
And every virtue won,
And every thought of holiness
Are His and His alone.

This gives glory and credit to God and also recognizes that He works in the details of our lives.

One of our first duties is the training of our children in good habits of virtue and purity. Those carrying the Gospel into new areas say they must begin with the children--that the adults are too steeped in their worldly habits to change readily. This is a truth that applies to us also. Praise the Lord there are exceptions to this rule--that God can call and change one of any age who comes to Him. But this is not the rule. If we allow our children to learn the ways and habits of the world and experiment in all its sins, it is likely we will reap a harvest of unconverted adults.

For development in holiness in our personal lives we must give ourselves to the study and thorough knowledge of God's Word. We must let His ways become ours. Spend more time in secret prayer and meditation. Shun evil. Have compassion and concern for the lost.

The inspired epistles are rich in advice for our help: Paul writes, "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." (Romans 12:9-15) There is similar advice in I Thessalonians 5:14-24. This passage concludes: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

God is faithful to do His part. Let us also put our effort and devotion into being victorious, useful citizens of God's Kingdom. If we want to claim the privileges and promises, let us also follow Jesus, deny ourselves and take up our cross. —L.C.

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE TREASURE AND THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

Matthew 13:44-46

Before going into these parables, I would like to picture the setting as I think of it.

In the first parable, we have a poor farmer who has worked many years for other men, farming land he does not own.

In the second parable, we have a man whose business is buying and selling pearls and possibly some gold and precious stones. But business has been bad; he can find only small, lowgrade pearls, and his future isn't too bright.

So both the farmer and the merchant man would be glad for the opportunity to better their situations. And when the opportunity comes, they don't hesitate

to put their all into the venture.

The point illustrated by these two parables is easy to see as both are short and both show the same truth: that it is worth all we have or think we have to obtain a place in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Two completely different sacrifices are involved when speaking of obtaining a treasure or a goodly pearl, and of entering the Kingdom of God. Just as the farmer and the merchant man were willing to joyfully exchange all their material possessions for one of greater value, so must we be willing to joyfully exchange worldly freedoms, pleasures and enjoyments (so called) for a home in Heaven. And this, though it be all we could desire, is not the only reward. For: "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." (Luke 18:29,30)

We like to make "good deals" with respect to our earthly possessions, just as this farmer and merchant man did. And in view of the above verses, we have been offered something of such inestimable value in exchange for that which is so worthless.

Since a parable was usually intended to convey only one truth, we may run into difficulty in trying to apply all the details. However, some of these details suggest various teachings of Jesus.

The kingdom is hidden, not from all, but from the "wise and prudent." But it is found of those who seek after the manner of the merchant man, who was no doubt quite diligent in seeking so valuable an item.

There is one more point which these parables may contain. The farmer rehid the treasure in the field until he could purchase that field. A Christian will hide the kingdom in his heart for the same purpose: that he may retain possession of it. And shedding the light of Christ abroad certainly would not diminish the Kingdom of God which is within him.

—David Royer

Long Barn, California

LETTER FROM BRAZIL

(Continued)

A great desire of ours is sometime to be able to converse fluently with the Brazilians. We will then be better able to know and understand them, and they likewise understand us and our ways better.

The terrain here in the area varies from flat to rolling, with the greatest percentage slightly rolling. There are many springs, streams, and rivers (an abundant supply of water).

The vegetation varies from heavy woods (jungle) to just native campo grass used for grazing. The North American settlement in this area is mostly all cleared and farmed or grazed.

There are hundreds of palm trees along the springs, streams and rivers.

There is a large number of all kinds of wild life here, of which we see some occasionally. There are deer, tapir, wolves, big cats (jaguar), ant eaters, all kinds of snakes, rabbits, and many others. We don't see much of them, because as man moves in they move out further.

There are many beautiful birds such as large parrots, small parrots, parakeets, and many more. The largest of the birds is the large ostrich which we all are trying to protect. There are quite a few of them but we don't want them to become extinct.

Then of course the rivers contain fish; also the snakes are usually found along the water.

As all of you know this is a tropical climate. We find it very pleasant, comfortable, and enjoyable as the elevation is 2500 feet above sea level. The summer temperatures range from 80 to 90 degrees in the daytime, and from 60 to 70 degrees at night. The winter temperatures range from 70 to 80 degrees in the daytime, and from 40 to 60 degrees at night. This is a general range of the temperatures. They say we have one frost in ten years and they aren't expecting frost this winter as they had a hard frost last July.

The humidity is generally lower here than in Ohio, except when it is raining. The annual rainfall here is somewhere between 50 and 60 inches, with most of it coming between the first of October and the last of May. The dry season or fall and winter here is June through September, which we are looking forward to, as we have never experienced a winter here.

The crops here are rice, beans, corn, cotton, soybeans, milo, citrus fruit, bananas, peanuts, and melons, tomatoes, potatoes and others.

I will try to give you a description of the location and setting of the small parcel of land that God is letting us use for a short time at best. It is a grain and livestock farm located 22 miles northwest of Rio Verde which has a population of approximately 20,000. The farm is located in the center of the original Holdeman Mennonite settlement with the Monte Alegra River as our north line. At the present it is all dirt road to town with a new paved road under construction, to be finished soon. When it is finished we will have only four or five miles of dirt road to get to the paved road.

The house is a six room North American brick ranch style house with three bedrooms, a stone fireplace, and bath and utility room. A spring-fed stream one hundred and thirty feet west of our house, bordered by dozens of palm trees, flows into the Monte Alegra River nine hundred feet north (in front) of the house. Northwest of the house is a pond stocked with fish. The banana and citrus trees (lemon, oranges, and tangerine) are between the buildings and the river. There are now two barns south and mostly east of the house and a small shop south of the house.

Violet's cooking style varies from the Brazilian stove to a bottled gas hot plate to the electronic (micro-wave) oven. We use our electric generator most every evening for lights, operating the refrigerator and pumping water.

We have thirty brahma cattle and one holstein cow. I am back to milking by hand again. The holstein is the only one that needs milking.

On April thirteenth the four of us went into town to the Evangelico Hospital to see the little baby girl born March eleventh that was needing a home, and of course the four of us were wanting to adopt a baby girl. We visited the baby and the staff and then told the staff we would like to have her. They said we could come to the hospital and get her in two days as they wanted her under observation for awhile. We named her Cheryl Ann. On April fifteenth the roads were too muddy and wet for us to get into town with our vehicle, so Violet went into town and the hospital with Anna Kramer and brought our Cheryl Ann home which God blessed us with. She is doing fine. Baby crying must be a universal language, as she cries just like a North American baby. We thank God for Cheryl.

Brent goes back to school a week from Monday, starting the second term of the year. He attends the Mennonite school three miles south of our house or one mile from our farm. There are two months of vacation for the school children during harvest and this is between terms. It is a two room school and there are approximately forty students and two teachers. The subjects are in English and Portuguese which makes it rather difficult as they are learning the subjects in two languages.

We have been wonderfully blessed with a seed time and a good harvest, as it was an ideal summer with plenty of rainfall.

We have had thirty-two visitors from the United States in our home in six months, which we really enjoyed and appreciated. Something I wouldn't have believed could happen, but it did. So it is your turn; come see us when you can.

We thank all of you for your support and encouragement through your prayers and letters. It has been a great help to us, so please keep up the good work, that we all will remain faithful to our God unto the end.

We regret that all of the letters you are writing to us don't get here, but don't let that discourage

you. If some of you wrote to us a long time back and we haven't answered, it is because we didn't get your letter, so please try again. I don't know what the trouble is, but we are inquiring to see what can be done.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will be with you and us over this Annual Pentecostal Meeting and guide and direct all things according to the Word of God. We cannot be there but have fond memories of last year's meeting in the west. Also, we can dream about a future one which we may attend with you if the Lord tarries.

We invite each and all of you to come visit us any time you can. You are welcome anytime. We hope our parents can visit us soon and think it would be nice if they would bring a minister along or any of the other brethren and sisters and children that can come.

In closing may we labor each day for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom is our prayer.

Your brother and sister in Christ,
Wade, Violet, Brent, Ted and Cheryl Flora

NEWS NOTES

Union power derives from the collective power of the membership to withhold labour. That power is abused when it prevents others from working, restricts the supply of labour or imposes conditions on employers that prevent them from contracting with non-union suppliers. —The Liberal, Richmond Hill, Ont.

The average American child witnesses the destruction of 13,400 human beings on TV by age 15. These repeated scenes of violence and killing do something to the child's mind—they harden his heart.

Dr. Victor B. Cline, a psychology professor at the University of Utah, concludes that seeing so many people mistreated or even killed causes the child to be less sensitive to people who are mistreated. They no longer have compassion or feeling for the victims.

—Young Companion (adapted)

HISTORICAL

CORINTH

Corinth was one of the outstanding cities of ancient Greece, famous for its commerce, architecture, and prosperity. It was situated about fifty miles west of Athens on the isthmus of land connecting northern Greece with the Peloponnesus, the peninsula of southern Greece. Due to its location, Corinth was a commercial center and meeting place between the East and West. It had two ports--Cenchrea on the east and Lectaeum on the west--between which ships were hauled overland to avoid the long journey around southern Greece.

Corinth, like Athens, has been in existence for thousands of years. Its golden age was between 657 and 584 B.C. with Periander, who was classed as one of the wise men of Greece, the most famous ruler. During this time advances were made in art, architecture, and inventions; also, several colonies were founded which contributed greatly to the wealth and power of the city.

Another prosperous time for Corinth was the second century before Christ. During this time Corinth was the chief city of the Achaian League and became an ally of Rome. This alliance did not last, however, and in 146 B.C. the Romans completely destroyed the city, sold its inhabitants into slavery, and carried away a vast collection of art treasures.

During the next hundred years Corinth was nothing more than a wasteland. Then in 46 B.C. Julius Caesar rebuilt the city and repopulated it with freedmen from Italy and homeless Greeks. It was not long before Corinth was prosperous again as trade developed with cities such as Ephesus and Thessalonica. Also, Caesar made Corinth, which he named Laus Julia, the seat of government of Achaia.

Corinth in the Apostle Paul's day was a wealthy city of world renown. It was inhabited by a mixture

of Greeks, Romans, Orientals and Jews. The population is estimated to have been 400,000; only Rome, Alexandria and Antioch were larger. Many deities were worshipped, among them Athene, Artemis, Zeus, Apollo and Aphrodite. Evidence of this idolatry was manifested in the many statues and temples of the various gods and goddesses throughout the city. Also prevalent was immorality, which was encouraged and popularized by the religion of the day.

Paul traveled to Corinth from Athens on his second missionary journey (about 52 A.D.) and stayed there eighteen months. During that time he supported himself by working as a tentmaker and founded one of his greatest churches. Paul was assisted by Aquila and Priscilla, Silas, and Timotheus. As in other cities, he preached first in the synagogue of the Jews and was able to convert some of them. However, the Jews who did not believe brought him to judgment to be tried by Gallio, the deputy of Achaia. When Gallio realized that the charges against Paul were wholly related to religious matters, he refused to become involved and "drove them from the judgment seat." (Acts 18:16) Thus unhindered, Paul continued his work in the city and converted many Gentiles, and Corinth became the center of his missionary work in Greece.

Paul wrote I Corinthians about three years after he left Corinth when he heard of serious problems that were disturbing the church. II Corinthians was written several months later, after Paul had received word from Titus that his letter had been effective. (Titus had been sent by Paul to help the Corinthian church solve its problems.) Paul then determined to visit the church at Corinth again, which he did shortly thereafter. At Corinth he wrote the epistle to the Romans.

During the Middle Ages Corinth suffered many disasters and was a battleground for years. In 1858 it was destroyed by an earthquake, and New Corinth was built a few miles away. Today Corinth is a small, poor village with only the ruins of the ancient city

nearby to remind it of its illustrious place in history.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

—Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

Lord, of the days that are left to me

I give them to Thy hand,

Take me and break me and mould me to

The pattern Thou hast planned.

Quiet, Lord, my restless heart,

Keep me calm and still in Thee;

Teach me how to watch and wait

Until Thy perfect will I see.

Tomorrow's plans I do not know,

I only know this minute,

And He will say "This the way,

By faith now walk you in it."

I know His coming draweth nigh,

So earnestly I pray,

Oh, Lord help me to live

As if it were today.

Selected by Ella Garber

BAPTISM

Once more we were made to rejoice with Heaven when another precious soul requested Christian baptism, which was administered Sunday, June 27 to Danetta Skiles. May she be faithful and an example to others.

—Elmer Brovont

CORRECTION

The correct birth date for Joseph Willis Cover is June 22, 1976.

CHILDREN'S PAGE

The man to identify this time was a Jew who with his wife had to leave their home in Rome because of the emperor's command that all Jews must get out. This man and his wife came to Corinth and met Paul there. Paul had come to preach the Gospel, and he lived with this couple in Corinth. They all were tentmakers and worked together. This man and his wife became zealous Christians and helped Paul much in establishing churches. They travelled together to Ephesus where Paul left them to go on to Jerusalem and back through Galatia and Phrygia encouraging the churches on his way.

While at Ephesus, this couple met another Jew, Apollos, who was preaching but only about John's baptism. They took Apollos and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Apollos became a mighty preacher of the Gospel. He was particularly effective in convincing the Jews and showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

This man and his wife continued as faithful Christian workers and helpers of Paul. They are mentioned several times in Paul's epistles. They must have generously opened their home to the Christian converts because twice in his epistles Paul mentioned the church that was in their house—evidently at two different places where they lived.

Who were these people?

Find the answer by filling in the blanks:

1. (Paul) found a certain Jew named _____, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife _____ . . . and came unto them. (Acts 18:2)

2. Greet _____ and _____ my helpers in
Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own
necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all
the churches of the Gentiles. (Romans 16:3,4) —L.C.

THE PILGRIM

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NO. 8

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

DRAW ME, SAVIOUR, AFTER THEE

Saviour, the world's and mine
Was ever grief like Thine?
Thou my pain, my curse, hast borne;
All my sins were laid on Thee;
Help me, Lord, for Thee I mourn;
Draw me, Saviour, after Thee.

To love is all my wish;
I only live for this:
Grant me, Lord, my heart's desire,
There, by faith, forever dwell;
This I always will require,
Thee, and only Thee to feel.

Thy power I pant to prove,
Rooted and fixed in love;
Strengthened by Thy Spirit's might,
Wise to fathom things divine,
What the length, and breadth, and height,
What the depth of love like Thine.

Ah! give me this to know,
With all Thy saints below;
Swells my soul to compass Thee:
Pants in Thee to live and move;
Filled with all the Deity,
All immersed and lost in love!

—Charles Wesley

Selected by Susie Wagner

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OCCUPY TILL I COME

I would like to offer some thoughts on the talents the Lord has given to us and the results of the use or lack of use of the same.

The Lord has given all of us abilities, some more and some less as He sees we are able to use them. He does not expect the same accomplishments from everyone, but we can be sure that He does expect each of us to use the talents we do have to the best of our ability. The servant who only had one talent in Matthew 25 was not condemned for not gaining five talents or two talents, but because he didn't make use of the one talent he had!

I believe the carnal nature in all of us would like to do some great thing in order that we might be looked up to or honored and considered to be someone of importance. The Lord's place for us in this life is the opposite of this, that we should humble ourselves--just be a meek and lowly servant who is desirous of giving all honor and praise to Him to whom all praise belongs.

The Lord sent an angel to inform Gideon that he was to accomplish the deliverance of Israel from the Midianites. Gideon said, "Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." (Judges 6:15) Do we feel our weakness and unworthiness as Gideon did?

In delivering Israel from the Midianites the Lord only needed one Gideon, but He chose three hundred soldiers to help. There are also an unnamed number of other soldiers who helped in the pursuit and destruction of the enemy. Because all of these people were not leaders and are not recorded in history as heroes does not mean they were not important! Nor does it mean they were not just as needed and pleasing in

God's sight! They just had different places to fill with the talents the Lord had given them.

How do you suppose the battle would have come out if the three hundred had thought, "No use in me blowing this trumpet. This won't make any difference anyhow!" The battle was won because each one used his talent in the place the Lord gave him.

In our time we aren't fighting any Midianites, but we are in a much more important struggle to deliver souls from the oppression of sin. The Lord doesn't need all of us to be Gideons, but He told all the servants "Occupy till I come." Not many of us are likely to be called upon to perform some great and notable work. Every one of us, however, does have some talents, and the Lord expects results! All of us can exercise in denying ourselves of things that might be a stumbling block to our brother. We can also exercise "the wisdom that is from above" which is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." If we exercise our talents it can result, through the Lord's help, in the salvation of precious souls. If we neglect to use our talents it will result in the loss of our soul. How shall we face the great Judge if our willful neglect has resulted in the loss of the precious souls of our children? or our brother? or some loved one?

My prayer is that we may all be more diligent in using our talents to build up the Lord's kingdom.

Come on then, as valiant soldiers,
Fight the fight of faith and love;
Vanquish sin and Satan boldly,
Never cease till called above.

Then when'er the trumpet's sounding,
And our Lord the roll doth call;
"Well done, good and faithful servant,"
From His lips will pay for all.

--James Beery
Nappanee, Indiana

ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD

Mark 10:27

This is not to say that God will do "all things" that are possible for Him to do. The Bible nowhere indicates that God does anything arbitrarily (without good reason) or anything that would violate His own laws or purposes; but that all His acts are for good and sufficient reason. This is plainly demonstrated in Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane when He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt." (Mark 14:36) We know now that the cup was not removed, for the reason that it would have been in conflict with the divine purpose to redeem man from the fall, by the sacrificial death of His Son on the cross. Jesus also said to Peter, "Put up again thy sword into his place . . . Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, THAT THUS IT MUST BE?" (Matthew 26:52-54)

God has the prerogative to employ any means which He may choose to accomplish His eternal purpose in creating the world and mankind for his own eternal glory. No man or created being can command God or put obligation of any kind upon Him. We may tend to be like the people of Nazareth, where Jesus was brought up. He said to them, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country." (Luke 4:23) His answer to them clearly shows that He had good reason for what He did, and it was not necessary to perform the same miracles in all the places where He would come. He told them that there were many widows in Israel in the days of "Elias" (Elijah), but only to the one at Sarepta did God send the prophet Elijah. He could have sustained her without sending Elijah to her home. And He could have sustained Elijah any other place which He may have chosen.

Also, with Naaman the Leper: would anyone think that God could not have healed him without having him dip himself seven times in Jordan? It would seem entirely possible that God could have healed him in his own country before he came into Israel. But we have not the least doubt but that the way it was done was for good and sufficient reason. In Matthew 8:2 a certain leper came to Jesus and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus touched him, saying, "I will; be thou clean." And immediately the leprosy was cleansed.

In St. John 9, we read how Jesus gave sight to a man that was born blind. We are told that He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay; and said, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." He went and washed and came seeing. But in Matthew 20:30-34, when Jesus passed through Jericho on His last journey to Jerusalem, "two blind men" were sitting by the way side, and when they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David." And Jesus called them and asked what they would that He should do for them, and they said, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." So Jesus touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

Do we suppose that it was not possible for Jesus to give sight to the blind man in St. John 9 in the same manner as he did to those on the Jericho road? Perhaps none of us will doubt that He could have given him sight without even touching him. But we are told in the same chapter why He found this blind man. In response to a question from His disciples He said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Likewise there can be no doubt but that there was good and sufficient reason for putting the clay on his eyes, and to wash in the pool of Siloam. We believe that it was possible for God to give him sight without putting clay on his eyes, or having him wash in the

pool of Siloam. But we KNOW it was possible for Him to do it the way He did.

While Jesus was here on earth He had the power and authority to forgive sins by simply saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." But after His death and resurrection He commanded His apostles to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:19,20) In the book of Mark it reads, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15,16) And in Luke He says, ". . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (Luke 24:47)

The apostles understood the meaning of this commission and on the day of Pentecost we find Peter preaching to those who had crucified the Lord. When they cried out "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Likewise Saul (Paul) of Tarsus was told by Ananias, whom the Lord sent to lay his hands on him that he might receive his sight, "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)

These scriptures, and many others, reveal to us how the Lord Jesus has ordained that water baptism should accompany remission of sins. It is sometimes objected that "water cannot remove sins." But we know that all things are possible with God, and He can apply the merit of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins in any manner which He may deem best. And it is His revealed will that since the atonement and resurrection of Jesus, that all who will believe in Him, and repent, can receive water baptism

for the remission of sins. With man this would be impossible, but with God all things are possible, and He can remove the penitent's sins in the baptismal waters as well as He cleansed the leprosy of Naaman in the River Jordan. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of THE OPERATION OF GOD, who hath raised him from the dead." (Colossians 2:12)

--D. F. Wolf
Modesto, California

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS
Matthew 25:14-30

As this parable is familiar and rather lengthy, we will just go through the Matthew version of it, making comments on a few specifics of the teaching of Jesus.

Verse 14 tells of a man delivering his goods to his servants and departing into a far country. This our Creator has done, although it's hard to believe. He has created all things, then stepped back "out of sight", leaving the earth and all it contains in the hands of man.

Vs. 15. He gave to every man "according to his several ability"--that is, no more and no less than the man could handle. Thus He is fair, and we have no right to complain that God has given us too much or not enough. If any man desires God to give him more, he should first be diligent in using the proper amount he has. It's easy to see why the master didn't give five talents to the third servant or only one to the first.

Vs. 16-17. The two good servants traded their money, each doubling what their master had given them. Trading is risky business--you can gain by it, or lose all. We can do all things through Christ, if we trust and don't fear.

Vs. 18. The third servant had only received one talent, but he misused it, hiding it in the earth where it could do no good at all.

Vs. 19. "After a long time" their master returned to reckon with them. No doubt the time seemed longer to the servants than it did to their busy, travelling master, just as it does to us, but not to God. Certainly time must have dragged slowly for the poor steward with his buried talent.

Vs. 20-23. Now, on this Day of Judgment, the two faithful servants have their reward. They give their master what he had long ago entrusted into their hands, joyfully knowing that they have done well. When the master sees that they have doubled the initial sums, he cries to each, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord!" Thus, men who had simply done their duty as unprofitable servants received great honor from their kind master. Such joy can we look forward to with divine foretaste, if we are faithful in the service of God.

Vs. 24-30. Now the third servant steps forward. Perhaps he has high hopes, after hearing the promises to the other two stewards. After all, he hasn't misplaced the talent. He hasn't lost it in gambling, or stolen it. And yet . . .

The talent still bears the smell of the moist earth where it has been buried as he gives it to the master. "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine."

But, no, the master does not want the same single talent. The anger of a righteous God appears against the wickedness of a lazy servant. This master who was so gracious to the other two stewards is indeed "an hard man" to the wicked. "You wicked and slothful servant," he cries, "You knew that I reap where I didn't sow, and gather where I didn't straw! You should have therefore put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury!" Then the master says to others, "Take

therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

What a sad ending to the story. And it's sadder yet, when we think that every normal person on the earth has at least one talent loaned to him--but most are wicked and slothful servants.

Let's take a harder look at the mistakes of the third steward. First, his excuses: "Lord, I was afraid: I knew you were an hard man." Here he's blaming his master, as if his master's greatness scared him into burying the talent. People all around us have the same idea of our God. But like the master said, "If you knew I was a hard man, why didn't you do something about it? You could at least have put my money in the bank to gain interest."

The wicked servant's second excuse was that his master could reap where he hadn't sown. In other words, "You don't need me anyway. You're so powerful that my doings don't make much difference." This is not true. If the master had only given him 1/100th of a talent he should have used it as a good steward.

Man was created for the glory of God, and the clay has no right to rebel against the potter. But notice one thing: even in the heat of his wrath the good master was not being selfish. He didn't say "Give me that talent!"--rather he had it given to the other servant who had been most profitable. So the great reason of his anger was that a servant had refused to do his duty, failed the Test of Life, cancelled the purpose of his creation.

--Stanley K. Brubaker
Nappanee, Indiana

Those who deserve love least, need it most.

—Family Life

EDITORIAL... ATTITUDES

How important are our attitudes! The prophet Ezekiel cried out against idolatrous Israel in a time when they were being overcome and punished for their sins. He said that Israel had sinned more than Sodom and Samaria. (See Ezekiel 16.) We think of Sodom as one of the wickedest cities of all time. The prophet described her sins—not in the details of the abominations that we might think of. But he described their basic attitudes. Ezekiel 16:49-50 says, "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good."

We should tremble as we realize how closely this description fits our country today. When people become proud and haughty, when they have all they can eat, and when they have time on their hands, they are wide open to commit the sins of Sodom. In our country the poor and needy are cared for, but can we say it is done from the heart by the generosity of those who have plenty? There are many exceptions, but generally the poor are supported by a wealthy government supplying liberally and contributing to more and more idleness.

Neither Sodom nor Samaria nor Israel had the advantages of our day. We know now of God's love for us through Jesus Christ and His great sacrifice for us. We know now that a life of humility and prayer and of walking with our Lord is worthwhile and has great reward—that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." (I Timothy 4:8) We know now the joy of sins forgiven—that "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1)

God is faithful. He called Israel and gave them opportunity to turn to Him. Perhaps the reason Israel's sin was greater than Sodom's was because Israel had greater opportunity to know God and His ways. If this is so, then truly we today are without excuse. Our attitudes and responses make the difference. Pride, haughtiness and carelessness bring error and the judgment of God. Yielding to God in humility and obedience results in righteousness and holiness. God calls us today like he called Solomon, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (II Chronicles 7:14) —L.C.

BAPTISMS

We were made to rejoice once more with the Heavenly beings when Anita Martin requested Christian baptism which was administered Sunday, July 25, 1976.

—Elmer Brovont

We of the Salida Congregation were again made to rejoice with the angels of Heaven when another precious soul, Carol Hatler, was received into our fellowship on August 1 by a public confession of faith in Jesus Christ and holy baptism.

—Daniel F. Wolf

COMMUNION NOTICE

The Salida Congregation of the Old Brethren Church have agreed, the Lord willing, to hold our fall love-feast on October 16 & 17.

A hearty invitation and welcome is extended to all of our members and friends to attend.

—Daniel F. Wolf

Also at Maple, Ontario on August 29.

HISTORICAL

ROME

Part I

The city of Rome has been among the most famous in the world for thousands of years; it was the capital city of the ancient Roman Empire, which ruled most of the known world for centuries. The significance of this one grand and awful city on world history cannot be overestimated.

Rome is located on the Tiber River on the western side of central Italy. The city was originally built on the Palatine hill and eventually covered six other hills (Capitoline, Quirinal, Caelian, Aventine, Viminal and Esquiline), and these seven hills were enclosed inside a stone wall. Rome was founded possibly around 1000 B.C.--the date is unknown, and later Roman writers guessed 753 B.C. as the date of origin. According to Roman mythology, Romulus, for whom the city was named, was the founder and first ruler of the city.

The early history of Rome indicates that war was almost constant. At first there were struggles with neighboring settlements for supremacy. During this time Rome was governed by kings until the end of the sixth century before Christ, when the monarchy was overthrown and the early Roman Republic was established. Following this were more wars with the Gauls, Etruscans, Samnites and others until by 265 B.C. Rome had conquered the area of what is now the nation of Italy.

Roman imperialism did not stop, however, with the acquisition of the Italian peninsula. Rome then began a series of struggles with other nations, beginning with Carthage, an important empire located on the northern coast of Africa. Rome and Carthage fought against each other in three separate wars between 264 and 146 B.C. These were known as the Punic Wars and involved Hannibal of Carthage, who became famous in history for his invasion of Italy through the Alps.

The end result of the clash between these two powers was the total destruction of Carthage and the acquisition of all its territory by victorious Rome.

In 214 B.C. Hannibal made an alliance with Philip V of Macedon, who in turn was allied with Antiochus of Syria, with the result that Rome went to war against Greece and Asia Minor and was again victorious. Thus, by 146 B.C. Rome controlled almost the entire area surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

The century between 146 and 46 B.C. was a troubled one for Rome. It has been called the period of the revolution, as the nation paid the price of the violence of the preceding generations. The wars of Rome had exacted a huge toll in the lives and fortunes of her people, especially the small farmers who were forced into military service. Also, slave labor was predominant and the small landowner could not compete with products produced by slavery; thus, farming became unprofitable. The Gracchi brothers, Tiberius and Gaius, attempted to enact reforms to help the poor, and both lost their lives for their efforts.

War continued for Rome, and soon military leaders came also to the head of the political government. The first of these was Marius, elected consul in 107 B.C. and followed by Sulla, appointed dictator in 86 B.C. Pompey became famous for his conquest of Syria and Palestine, and Julius Caesar fought against the Gauls and won for Rome the area of what is now Belgium and France. In 60 B.C. the first triumvirate was formed--a coalition of Pompey, Caesar and Crassus--to govern the Empire. These men were too ambitious to share the power of governing, however, and by 46 B.C., after three years of fighting Pompey's forces, Caesar became dictator of Rome.

Caesar ruled with force and made a number of contributions to Rome, among them the revision of the calendar to 365 days. However, he failed to substantially reduce the huge distance between the wealthy and the poor. Also, he gave himself such absolute power that the old aristocracy feared he intended to

make himself king, and on this charge he was assassinated in 44 B.C.

Following Caesar's death was another struggle for power. In 43 B.C. the second triumverate was formed, composed of Caesar's grandnephew, Octavian, and Mark Antony and Lepidus. By 31 B.C., after much conflict, Octavian emerged as sole ruler and in 27 B.C. was titled the Augustus and Imperator of Rome. He enacted many political reforms and also attempted to improve the morality of the people. Unlike some of his successors, he led a temperate life and sought a return to the ancient virtues. He encouraged building, and architecture and sculpture flourished. Ruins of some of these buildings still stand today.

Augustus began a new era in Roman history called the Principate, and his rule continued until 14 A.D. Thus, he was the ruler of Rome when Jesus was born in Bethlehem (see Luke 2:1).

Information from the Bible, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and Western Civilizations, by Edward Burns.

--Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

NOTE OF THANKS

We desire to express our heart-felt thanks and appreciation for all the prayers, cards and money, letters and visits from our loved ones, friends and neighbors while in the hospital. We are grateful for your continuing prayers. We pray that God will richly bless each and every one of you.

In Christian love,
Elmer and Rosa Brovont

BIRTH

MOORE - A daughter, Barbara Michelle, born August 26 to Kenneth and Doris Moore of Hughson, California.

At times together we break bread;
We do not know what lies ahead.
But there was One who long ago
Knew what He soon must undergo.

How sad, yet brave, did He appear;
For others welfare was His fear.
His loved ones could not comprehend
What they were told by this dear Friend.

To sad Gethmane they went
And there a night in prayer was spent.
His heart with such deep grief was filled
That bloody sweat from Jesus spilled.

Nearby, while His disciples slept,
Jesus, for sin with sorrow wept.
He felt the sin of all the world,
And Satan's darts at Him were hurled.

And when betrayed and mocked and scorned,
Forgiving love His heart adorned.
Not of Himself or suffering great
He thought—for others was His weight.

By cruel hate and enmity
The Lord was nailed upon the tree.
There deepest suffering and pain
He bore in love for others' gain.

In deepest pangs without, within,
He suffered, bled and died for sin.
Not of His own, but others' guilt
For everyone His blood was spilt.

Ah! pause, my soul, and see how well
He bore such grief that tongue can't tell.
He felt and suffered human woe;
Well does He all our feelings know.

When trials come, then may we feel
His understanding presence real;
Remembering others in their need,
For them, as well as ourselves, plead.

Miriam Sauder, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

CHILDREN'S PAGE

A YOUNG CHRISTIAN MINISTER

The young Christian we will describe this time was first found by Paul at Lystra. His mother and grandmother were Jewish women who believed and were faithful. His father was a Greek. He was well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted to take this young man with him, so he accompanied Paul on his second journey as he and Silas went from town to town encouraging the Christians and preaching about Jesus. Paul's helpers were not always together. Sometimes they divided and preached in different areas. It appears that this young man helped in the work until Paul was arrested. Even after Paul's arrest this man was with him at Rome. He helped in the writing of some of Paul's epistles. He became bishop of the Church at Ephesus where so many had turned to Christ. It seems that he was not always in good health, but in spite of this, was a very useful man. Paul sent him two letters that are now a part of the Bible and are called by his name.

Who was this man?

Find one spelling of his name in Acts 16:1-3 and another in the first blank below.

1."O _____, keep that which is committed to thy trust..." (I Timothy 6:20)

2."Let no man despise thy _____; but be thou an example of the _____, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in _____, in purity." (I Timothy 4:12)

3. "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee _____ unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (II Timothy 3:15) —L.C.

THE PILGRIM

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NO. 9

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

Awake! How can we sleep
When souls are bound in sin?
Should we not pray and weep
That they might freedom win?
Where are concern, and tears, and prayer?
How do the lost know that we care?

Awake! In earnest pray,
First search each our own heart.
Upon the altar lay
Ourselves; from sin depart.
For only when we're free from sin
Can we a soul for Jesus win.

Awake! Our time employ
In sincere prayer and praise,
That we might share the joy
Of walking in His ways.
Our apathy through prayer dispel,
Let love to serve Him us impel.

—Miriam J. Sauer

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

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IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME

In the second Epistle of Paul to Timothy (3:1) he tells us "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." Webster defines peril as "exposure to danger, jeopardy, hazard." Surely we can see we are facing such times now. We believe there never before was known a time when there was so much violence and crime in the western world as we have today, and it is rapidly getting worse. When we consider the boundless strife that is besetting us, it becomes us to be really on our guard. What terrible conditions some may have to endure we do not know. God allows us to know only what He chooses. The trend is so far removed from what it was fifty years ago. How we wish that our young people could see the change that is taking place. There never was a time when there were so many Christian professing fraternities as we have now, and we know they can't all be right. II Timothy 3:13: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

It has been said "The further we can see back, the further we can see into the future." This could mean "the older we are, or the more contact we have had with the past by our association with old people." I have upon several occasions noted how circumstances presented themselves in such an obvious way that we wondered afterward why we couldn't have seen what was coming. For any who like myself might have better hindsight than foresight, let us note some of Paul's prophecies of the last days.

"Covetousness." Webster calls it "greedy, inordinately desirous." How far-reaching can this go in the lives of professing Christians before we know it? The adversary has ways of making some of us desirous of

things that may not really be essential, could even be harmful to us. The word of God says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have . . ." (Hebrews 13:5) Yet we strive to accumulate more and more of this world's goods. Covetousness is probably one of the slyest ways that the adversary has to gain entrance into our lives. One poet put it so nicely:

From vanity turn off my eyes,
Let no corrupt design,
Nor covetous desires arise
Within this soul of mine.

"Disobedient to parents." We have to accept it that Paul made reference in this verse to adults, saying "For men shall be." Those of us who were raised so strictly a few decades ago were made to appreciate our parents--were delighted to obey and please them, not only while we were children, but we would not want to do anything that would grieve or burden our parents as long as they lived. I felt that it was most profitable for me that I could have my parents live close by until they passed away. I was able to continually solicit their opinion in about everything I went to do, being 40 when my father was called away. I felt that I would be unable to carry on without him. That is now nearly 30 years ago. Can we not see a "falling away" here? We seem to be living in an age now where there is apparently less and less need for the old folks. Young folks are no longer so delighted to please, honour and obey their parents if it involves a sacrifice. Covetousness is running so rampant that some can justify themselves in doing about as they please with little or no regard for their parents' wishes. It may be difficult to determine what percentage of our society falls into this category today, but suffice it to say that Paul could foresee that there would be a falling away here in the last days. We can see more and more where children are disobedient to parents.

"Unthankful." The word of God says we should be thankful for everything. True, the most of us want to be thankful for the many unmerited blessings we constantly enjoy. It is probably when we meet reverses that our thankfulness is brought to test. Are we as thankful then as we should be for the blessings that remain? Do we really know how to be truly thankful without having to endure some real hardships? Some of us have seen times that required much more than a 40 hour work week to supply our needs and to keep abreast with our responsibilities--have endured almost more physical strain at times than our bodies could stand. How can people who know nothing else but our present luxurious age really and truly know how to be thankful for the privileges they are enjoying? Some people have endured physical suffering. Some have suffered severe losses in other ways. True, God has a purpose in all our afflictions. But do we not rather profit more from our reverses than by our successes? I once knew a woman who had such an abundance of this world's goods that she made the remark that she had lack of nothing. BUT . . . alas, the tragic time came when she realized that she was stricken with cancer and had made no provision for her life hereafter.

How vain a toy is glittering wealth
If once compared to Thee,
Of what's my safety or my health,
Or all my friends to me?

"Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." This too is becoming more and more pronounced in the western world. Again, we hear multitudes say that they are living only once, they want to enjoy themselves as much as they can. Can we not rather find real enjoyment in earnestly endeavoring to live a life that would be acceptable to the "Judge of all the Earth?" Truly, pleasure seeking seems to be foremost in people's lives to-day. It has almost become a god to them. Being creatures of choice, we can choose what kind of pleasure we want. As the "Preacher" said,

Ecclesiastes 11:9, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Do we not see world conditions rapidly becoming more and more difficult? Much as we may regret to see it, it appears that some world powers can no longer be trusted by their pledges. Their policy is "The end justifies the means." I greatly fear that the rulers of our land do no longer have the regard for the rights of minority groups that they once had. However, we still have the consolation that He will never leave nor forsake His people. Christ warns us in Mark 13:22, "For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect."

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." (Mark 13:35-37)

—Amos Baker
Maple Ontario

GOD'S SAVING TRUTH

I saw the sunrise touch the leaves of green
And waken day upon the wooded hill;
I saw the light creep down the deep ravine
And every dark and shadowed crevice fill.
How like God's saving Truth! First but a gleam
Of tender love it falls upon the heart,
Then follows, ever growing, as a stream,
Until it floods and fills our every part!
No room for doubt or trembling fear remains!
Salvation's gate is opened from above!
The way is clear to shed sin's crimson stains!
Oh, saving Truth! God's precious gift of love!

By Dan H. Reese
Selected by Susie Wagner

CLEAN HEARTS

Most of us as parents have seen our children come in covered with mud. We realize that once again they have been playing with water or in mud puddles or some other dirty place. They didn't mean to get muddy but they were just having fun playing in the mud.

We have also seen those (or perhaps experienced it) who, in the course of a day of hard, dirty work, become so grimy they are hardly recognizable. They don't aim to get dirty. In fact, many of those in this kind of work are the cleanest of any when at home. But in their type of work they just cannot keep clean.

And then we meet some who are well-dressed, clean and well-groomed. But as we talk with them we realize that their speech is foul and profane and their attitudes careless. Perhaps they don't intend to talk bad, but because of the condition of their hearts they cannot avoid it. Jesus said of the evil men of that time "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Matthew 12:34)

Of these three cases, the ones who appeared so clean were really the dirty ones.

Personal appearance and cleanliness are important. But according to Jesus our Lord, there is something more important, and that is to have pure hearts.

The Jewish law contained a number of directions for washing and purification--especially for the priests. But when Jesus came, He found that much more had been added in the form of traditional washings. Jesus didn't follow the added traditions that sometimes hindered the spirit of the law. So the Pharisees found fault with the disciples of Jesus because they did not always wash their hands before they ate. They asked Jesus, "Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" Jesus answered them, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far

from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." He then gave them an example of how they were rejecting God's commandment by allowing a man to dishonour his father and mother, making excuse by their traditions. The account continues, "And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, hearken unto me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man." (See Mark 7:5-15)

Later Jesus explained that what went into a person's mouth would simply pass through and not enter into his heart. Whether his hands were dirty or clean would not really matter because it could not foul his heart. But He warned, "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark 7:20-23)

Leprosy was one of the most dreaded diseases, and under the law, lepers were unclean. In fact, they were required to live out away from the rest. "And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean." (Leviticus 13:45) They were separated from the congregation because of the contagious character of the disease. It slowly consumes the body until the leper finally dies. What a blessed relief it must have been, then, for the leper who came to Jesus "and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him,

saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Matthew 8:2-4)

The uncleanness of the heart is still greater than leprosy in the body. Jesus can cleanse sinful hearts the same way He healed the leper. Ananias told the blinded and humbled Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)

All have been defiled by sin. Therefore all need the cleansing of God. All need the blood of Jesus Christ. It isn't that we have to sin. But we all through weakness have yielded to the ever-persistent tempter. And sin also progresses and consumes and kills the sinner. But thanks be to God for "the fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins." The prophet Zechariah (13:1) had written these words: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

It is a fact that one cannot work in dust and dirt without getting dirty. You can't repair an engine without getting greasy. And a child can't play in the mud and stay clean. Neither can one who associates intimately with the world keep from acquiring worldly ways. By walking into temptation we can become dirty and defiled inwardly. This is where we take on the inner defilements that come out as vile speech, careless attitudes and bad habits and conduct.

No one needs to remain defiled and dirty inside or outside. Jesus is ready to forgive and cleanse all those who come to Him. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9)

"... Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." (James 4:8) "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." (Psalm 24:3-5) --L.C.

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Matthew 25:1-13

This parable was among the many teachings of Jesus after He departed from the temple and sat upon the Mount of Olives. The disciples asked Him privately to tell them how they would know the signs of His second coming and when the end of the world would be. (Matthew 24:1-3)

Jesus gave them many signs and warned them of many things to look for that would help them to understand, and pass on to others, why they should be ready at all times to meet the Lord when the time is finished on earth.

The ten virgins can very well illustrate that everyone will not be completely prepared to meet the Bridegroom (the Lord) when He comes to take us to heaven.

All ten virgins waited for the Bridegroom in the exact same way. When He came, five awoke and realized they were not ready for Him as they had thought. They could not go with their lamps not lit. Today, as we live in this sinful world, our lamps must be lit and trimmed at all times--as lights to others. When the Lord comes there will then be no more opportunity to obtain this precious oil of preparation.

The lesson is this: NOW is the time to prepare to meet the Lord when He comes, or it will be too late. As the parable reads in verses 11 and 12, "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Verse 13 sums it up as a warning to all people today--"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

--Charles Miller

MiWuk, California

"Fear not ye, neither be dismayed . . . for the battle is not yours, but God's." (II Chronicles 20:15)

Fight to "get" the victory, and you have lost the battle at the very outset. Your discomfiture as a Christian starts the very moment you begin to reckon that "you" must win. Suppose Satan sets out to assault you in your home or in your business or in your school. Difficulties mount up, misunderstandings arise, a situation you can neither deal with nor escape threatens to overwhelm you. You pray, you fast, you struggle and resist for days, but nothing happens. Why? You are trying to fight "into" victory, and in doing so are relinquishing the very ground that is yours. For in the person of Jesus Christ God has already conquered. Victory is ours "because it is His." He has given us His victory to hold. Satan is a defeated foe. It needs but a breath from the Lord to finish him off, and here you are trying to raise a hurricane! What then is the secret? Simply look up and praise Him. "Thy victory, Lord, is all-inclusive. I praise Thee it covers this situation too!" Then be at rest in a triumph already secured for you by God.

Doubt sees the obstacle,

Faith sees the way.

Doubt sees a long dark night,

Faith sees the day:

Doubt dreads to take a step,

Faith soars on high;

Doubt thunders, "Who believes?"

Faith answers, "I".

Selected by Janice Royer
from The Golden Chain

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Philippians 4:13

MY LORD AND I

I have a friend so precious,
So very dear to me;
He loves me with such tender love,
He loves so faithfully;
I could not live apart from Him,
I love to feel Him nigh,
And so we dwell together,
My Lord and I.

Sometimes I'm faint and weary;
He knows that I am weak,
And as He bids me lean on Him,
His help I gladly seek.
He leads me in the paths of light
Beneath a sunny sky,
And so we walk together,
My Lord and I.

I tell Him all my sorrows,
I tell Him all my joys.
I tell Him all that pleases me;
I tell Him what annoys.
He tells me what I ought to do,
Tells of His rich supply,
And so we talk together,
My Lord and I.

He knows how I am longing
Some weary soul to win,
And so He bids me go and speak
A loving word for Him.
He bids me tell His wondrous love,
And why He came to die;
And so we walk together,
My Lord and I.

He tells me of His Kingdom;
It is not far away;
And oh, His heart is longing
To take me there some day.
Immortal bliss is waiting,
And joys that never die;
Soon there will reign together,
My Lord and I.

Words of a hymn sung in the rocks and caves of France
during the fierce persecution of the Huguenots more than
350 years ago. —Selected by Elsie Wolf

HISTORICAL

ROME

Part II

The reign of Augustus ushered in an era of prosperity for the Roman Empire which lasted about two hundred years. Trade was expanded to all the known world, agriculture flourished, and manufacturing increased. However, this prosperity was confined almost exclusively to the upper classes.

Augustus preferred the title of Princeps, or first citizen of the State. Thus, the years of his rule and those of his successors are termed the period of the Principate, or early Empire; this endured until 284 A.D. Unfortunately, many of the rulers who followed Augustus were incapable and unenlightened. Several were brutal tyrants whose interests were anything but good government.

During this time signs pointing to eventual decline of the Empire were appearing. One of these was moral decay. The divorce rate, especially among the upper classes, was extremely high; crimes of violence were increasing, and the passion of the mob for cruelty exceeded anything known in the past. Extremely popular were gladiatorial combats in arenas such as the Colosseum (built by Vespasian about 75 A.D. with a capacity of 65,000). There gladiators often fought to the death, and Christians were thrown to wild beasts for the amusement of the crowds.

Conversely, many people turned again to religion. Mithraism, an ancient Persian belief, became very popular, but it was superseded in the first century A.D. by Christianity. While the Empire was generally tolerant regarding new religions, it inevitably came into conflict with Christianity, whose members worshipped Christ exclusively. Rome, of course, insisted that the Empire had first claim on its people and also required Emperor worship at times, and there the conflict began.

For some time there was no systematic persecution of Christians throughout the Empire, but many suffered in Rome. In 64 A.D. Nero, then emperor, set fire to Rome and, using the Christians as a scapegoat, condemned many to death. It is thought that both the Apostles Paul and Peter lost their lives during this persecution.

Several emperors persecuted the Christians to some extent, among them Domitian, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Septimus Severus, and Maximum. (It should be noted that some of these men would possibly not have been involved in persecution except that they felt it necessary to uphold the laws of the Empire.) Decius and Valerian (249-260 A.D.) were both determined to exterminate all Christians. The last Imperial persecution, by Diocletian (284-305), was the most severe. It is difficult to imagine the cruelty of these Romans as they hunted their fellow men like animals and tortured them to death in numerous ways. Yet the Christians endured, by their faith and trust in God, the worst their tormentors thrust upon them.

During the time of these persecutions, although many of its members were killed, the young Christian Church flourished. Many people in Rome, driven to hide for their lives, went underground to live in the catacombs. These were originally sandpits, extensive channels which had been dug under the earth to obtain sand for building purposes. The catacombs were enlarged and used effectively by Christians for many years; there they lived, worshipped, and buried their dead. Sixty catacombs have been discovered, with a combined area of nearly six hundred miles and where about six million Christians and Jews had been buried.

The years between 284 and 476 A.D. have been called the period of the late Empire. This began with the rule of Diocletian, when all pretense of a constitutional government was dropped and the emperor was the absolute sovereign. Diocletian was followed by Constantine I (306-337), who was known as Constantine

the Great. This ruler was famous for his toleration of the Christian religion; in 313 he gave Christianity an equal status with other religions and thus ended the policy of persecution. He was also known for establishing Constantinople (built on the site of ancient Byzantium) as his capital, thus opening a way for an eventual split of the Empire. The split occurred in 364 A.D. with the result that there were emperors in both Rome and Constantinople. Theodosius (382-395) united the East and West briefly, but at his death the Empire was divided again between his two sons.

Meanwhile the barbarians all along the frontiers of the Empire had been causing trouble sporadically for centuries, and as time went on their strength increased. Finally, in 476 A.D. the last emperor of Rome, Romulus Augustulus, was dethroned, and a barbarian chieftain was named the King of Rome. Although Roman civilization had been disintegrating for two hundred years, this event officially ended the existence of the great Roman Empire.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and Western Civilizations, by Edward Burns.

—Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

COMMUNION NOTICES

We, the members of the Old Brethren in Canada, Ohio and Indiana have chosen October 2 & 3 for a Communion Service at the Wakarusa meeting house. We extend a hearty invitation to the members and friends to be with us on this occasion.

—Elmer Brovent

The Salida Congregation of the Old Brethren Church have agreed, the Lord willing, to hold our fall Love-feast on October 16 & 17. A hearty invitation and welcome is extended to all of our members and friends to attend.

—Daniel F. Wolf

SECURITY

I need not envy any man;
No one has more than I,
For everything of His is mine
In earth or sea or sky.

What of men's stores of wealth and gold,
Their false security?
All crumbling into dust, when I
Am safe eternally.

Though others walk in silk and furs
And scorn my shabby dress,
Unseen by them, I wear the robe
Of His own righteousness!

What though they live in palaces?
Beyond the blue there stands
A mansion lovelier than dreams
One built by His own hands!

If they could only realize,
If they could only see
The riches which I have in Him
Then they would envy me.

By Martha Snell Nicholson. Selected by Alma Garber

LIGHT AFTER DARKNESS

Light after darkness, gain after loss,
Strength after weakness, crown after cross;
Sweet after bitter, hope after fears,
Home after wandering, praise after tears.

Sheaves after sowing, sun after rain,
Sight after mystery, peace after pain;
Joy after sorrow, calm after blast,
Rest after weariness, sweet rest at last.

Near after distant, gleam after gloom,
Love after loneliness, life after tomb;
After long agony, rapture of bliss,
Right was the pathway, leading to this.

By Frances Havergal. Selected by Leona Miller

CHILDREN'S PAGE

BACK TO SCHOOL

School time is here again. Summer is nearly over. The leaves will soon be falling, and before long the little animals will begin their winter rest. Here are some things to think about, children, as you begin another school term:

1. Be kind to the other students. This is the way you would like to be treated.
2. Be respectful and obedient to your teachers. They want to help you learn.
3. Study to be quiet. This is not easy, but it is what the apostle Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 4:11. It will help your teacher and the other students.
4. If someone does wrong to you, do something nice in return. This is a big order for anyone—even your parents. But Jesus says to "...resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matthew 5:39) And Paul writes to the Romans to "...overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21)
5. Remember that you belong to Jesus. Jesus calls us His sheep and His lambs, and He is the good Shepherd. He takes care of you.
6. Don't think you are better than other children. If you have been taught about Jesus, then you have this advantage and you are more responsible, but you are not better.
7. Be thankful that you have a school. To go to school is a privilege many in the past have not had.
8. Be careful of school property. It is expensive to replace.
9. Do your best in your studies, but don't try to beat someone else. It is more important to do your best and please God than to be at the top of the class.
—L.C.

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"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

LET US THEREFORE FEAR... —Hebrews 4:1

I have a fear within my heart
Of missing Heaven ever,
And from my Lord forever part,
And every tie to sever.

What! part with Him who leads the way
Away from sin and sorrow
And comforts me from day to day
And gives me hope tomorrow?

But flesh is weak to go astray
And wander from His keeping;
Fulfill desire to frisk and play
In time of serious reaping.

Temptations come to fill the mind
With things of evil doing,
And many times we come to find
A thought of evil brewing.

O keep me, Lord, close unto Thee
In these wild tempests blowing
That in the Guide Book I may see
My Guide and Pilot knowing.

I'm safe with Thee; O keep me near
To follow Thee forever.
Then stormy times I need not fear
When safe across the river.

—J. I. Cover, October 9, 1971

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MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets."
(Amos 3:7)

This text shows the unique position and high esteem which the Hebrew prophets had in the mind of God with regard to His Old Testament people, and of His ongoing purpose of redemption and salvation for fallen humanity in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The main body of the prophets whose writings we have in the Old Testament were called into service after the kingdom of Israel was divided, and when both the northern and southern parts were seriously apostatizing and falling into idolatry, which was about two hundred years before they were both taken into captivity by Assyria and Babylon. It might be said of the prophets that they were the preachers of the Old Testament era. Their mission was to tell the people of their sins and try to turn them back to the true service of the Lord, and to warn of impending judgments if they did not repent, and at the same time to hold before them the prospect of a glorious future restoration through a great Messiah Prince whom the Lord would some time raise up of their own nation of the family of David.

We are accustomed to thinking of Isaiah as the first of the Old Testament prophets because the book which bears his name is first in order of arrangement in our Bibles. But some of the so-called minor prophets were probably one hundred years before Isaiah's time.

There were many other prophets than those whose writings are recorded in our Bibles and some far more ancient. Some of them were sent on only a single mission and nothing more is known of them: as Micaiah in the time of Ahab, king of Israel, and Jahaziel who

encouraged Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to go into the battle singing, and Azariah who prophesied against Asa, king of Judah. Also there was Jonah who was sent to prophesy against Nineveh, and others whose names we do not have, as the prophet out of Judah who was sent to cry against the altar at Bethel.

In the first chapter of Luke, when Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, was moved by the Holy Ghost to prophesy concerning John, he said "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people . . . as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, WHICH HAVE BEEN SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN." We may think of Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," as being the most ancient of the known prophets, for we read in the epistle of Jude where he says that Enoch prophesied of God's Judgments upon the wicked and ungodly (possibly of his own time) and far down into the future to the coming of the Lord to execute judgment upon the wicked.

Moses, who lived about 1500 B.C., was also a prophet and prophesied of the coming of Jesus the Messiah, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you . . . Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." (Acts 3:22-24) In this third chapter of Acts the apostle Peter is citing the testimony of the prophets for proof that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and the work they were doing in His name was foreseen and foretold by the prophets: "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." (verse 18)

It is commonly understood that Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament called the Pentateuch. But the first several chapters of Genesis may well have been written before the flood and carried by Noah and his sons through the flood and eventually delivered to Moses and compiled by him into the

first book of the Bible as we have it today. This is altogether possible when we take into consideration the fact that Enoch and Methuselah were over 200 years contemporary with Adam. And Shem, who was contemporary with Methuselah, came through the flood and lived throughout the entire lifetime of Abraham and continued for fifty years contemporary with Jacob.

There should be no question with us regarding man's ability to write and make records from the very first. For if God created Adam in His own image, it would be the most reasonable thing that could be that He would teach him a language to communicate with his Maker. And if God willed that succeeding generations should have a record of their origin, it would only be reasonable that He would teach Adam and his posterity how to write and record what was done. This could explain why the style of the first several chapters of our Bible differ somewhat from the rest of the writings of Moses.

Our interest in this subject is this: In what way, if any, do the Old Testament prophecies relate to us and our time? We believe the New Testament writers to be the authorized and inspired interpreters of the Old Testament prophecies. And they abound with quotations from the Old Testament concerning Jesus and his mission in the world--from before His birth; of His ministry; His suffering; His death and resurrection, and of His coming to the earth again in glory.

Jesus said to the two on the road to Emmaus, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:25-27)

It is said by some that the Old Testament prophets were "silent concerning the church age." But we know they prophesied of the Holy Spirit age, because Peter said to the multitude on the day of Pentecost that what they were witnessing was "that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." And we know that they prophesied

of the Gospel age, because the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:1,2, "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by the prophets in the holy scriptures.)" We know that the prophets spoke of the age of Grace, because it is said in I Peter 1:10-12, ". . . Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves,

I SOUGHT AND FOUND

I sought and He has answered
In love that knows no bound.
I knocked; the door was opened,
And calm and peace I found.
I felt my need; I asked Him
And saving power received.
I touched the outstretched scepter,
Found grace, when I believed.

--Miriam Sauder
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

In the fourth chapter of Galatians the apostle Paul quotes from the 54th chapter of Isaiah, where an unmarried woman is suddenly surrounded by an enormous family of children, of which there had been no travail of birth, having many more children than the "married wife". And he interprets this prophecy as being an "allegory" to describe the New Covenant children of God, children of "Promise", begotten in Christ Jesus by the Spirit. This prophecy began to have its

fulfillment on the day of Pentecost when three thousand souls joined the New Born Church of Christ. And we are told that the Lord added to the "Church" daily such as should be saved. Soon others joined, and soon we read of five thousand being together in Solomon's porch.

In the 15th chapter of the Acts (probably 20 years after Pentecost), when the apostles had come to a decision regarding receiving Gentiles into the Church, they had listened to the Holy Ghost and also cited the "prophets" for authority for what they were doing, for they said, "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things." The apostle Paul told king Agrippa (Acts 26: 22,23) that he was preaching "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles!"

Lastly, Paul says in Romans 15:9-16, "As it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust . . . That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."

From all these scriptures, and many others which could be cited, we conclude just like the text said: The Lord did reveal His secrets unto His servants the prophets, including His Eternal purposes to redeem mankind from the Fall and purchase for Himself a

people to inherit eternal life in perpetual fellowship with Himself and Jesus Christ and all holy beings. And though the prophets may not have always fully understood the meaning of all their prophecies, they prophesied abundantly of the Old Testament preparation age, and of the New Testament fulfillment age, and of the ultimate consummation and eternal age that is to be brought into fulfillment at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes to earth again in glory. As one writer has said, "We are the goal-people, who fit into the eternal purposes of Him who created us and who regenerated us by the work of Christ. The Old Testament Scriptures are ours, just as they were Paul's, and the New Testament is the proper sequel to the Old Testament. The whole Bible has a marvelous unity as promise and fulfillment, as purpose and accomplishment, as shadow and substance, as type and antitype, as first covenant which is inseparable from the second covenant. Thank God for the Gospel of both the Testaments."

--Daniel F. Wolf
Modesto, California

I KNOW HIM

...For I know whom I have believed... —II Timothy 1:12

What wondrous blessings overflow
When we can truly say "I know."
I know in Whom I have believed,
I know the One I have received,
I know His blood avails for me,
I know that I was blind, but see,
I know that my Redeemer lives,
I know the gift He freely gives,
I know He'll keep me to the end,
I know He's my unfailing friend,
I know He's coming in the sky,
I know the time is drawing nigh.

By R. E. Neighbor Selected by Wayne Crawmer

PARABLE STUDY

THE FIG TREE

Matthew 24:32 and Luke 21:29-31

Matthew 24:32: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh." We feel that Jesus has used a natural illustration to explain a spiritual truth. This parable, we believe, refers to the second coming of Christ. As we read and study the scripture we feel this event is very near--maybe much nearer than we think.

Jesus spoke to the people of His day and said, "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" (Luke 12:56) Some of the things (and many more) that are happening in Israel are some of the signs--Israel becoming a nation and blossoming like a rose, and the Jews returning back as they have. When have we seen more violence, pestilences, earthquakes, drunkenness, marriage and remarriage and children rising up against parents. And many more could be named. It also says, "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matthew 24:37)

Don't let ourselves be found taken up with the cares and trends of this day and age, but let us hold fast the profession of our faith and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. And let us assemble ourselves together more often--speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and making melody in our hearts to the Lord.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Do we have on the wedding garment? Are we washed in the blood of the Lamb?

ARE WE READY?

--Herman Royer
Nappanee, Indiana

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

The customer stood holding in his hand a large, odd-shaped light globe. It was a special mercury-vapor lamp from a "dawn to dusk" fixture that stood high on a pole to light his yard at night. It had burned out and he wanted a new one. When he learned that the store did not have a replacement, he told me this story.

He said "This light may have saved a girl's life." It was one dark night near his home in Ponderosa Hills, a subdivision in the brushy hills between Tuolumne and Twain Harte, California. A young girl was driving a pickup on the winding grade not far from his home. Something went wrong and her pickup left the road and plunged over the edge into the darkness below. When the girl woke up all was dark. She had no idea where she was. She was bruised, battered and bloody but she could move. Only one thing looked good to her and that was a light some distance away. She thought to herself "I must reach that light because there must be someone there to help me." She started painfully making her way toward it, stumbling, crawling, crossing fences and boulders, but always keeping her eyes on that light. Brush tore at her face and the ruggedness of the terrain made her progress slow. Many times she fell but she finally arrived at the house of the man who told the story.

In the middle of the night the man heard a knock on his door. There he found a young girl covered with blood and badly in need of help. She had reached his lighted yard and he was able to take her to receive medical help. By retracing her route to his place he could see and marvel at the obstacles she had surmounted in her struggle to reach the light.

I thought--how similar to the sinner in need of salvation. There shines Jesus--the light of the world. He is ready to help and direct those who wake up to their lost, helpless condition. The Light is there to guide the wrecked, battered souls to Him and it never burns out.

If you find yourself, dear reader, in this condition (and we all need the Savior) look up and see the Light. Follow that Light. Don't let any fence or valley or any obstacle hide that Light from view, but persist in coming to the Light where there is help--forgiveness for your sins and salvation for your soul.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." --L.C.

The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in,
The Light of the world is Jesus.

Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me,
Once I was blind, but now I can see:
The Light of the world is Jesus.

—P. P. Bliss

NOW IS THE TIME

Winter is coming!. Everyone is talking about it. Newspapers display ads for tires, good roofs, insulation and warm clothes before cold weather strikes. Fathers are anxious to gather a great supply of firewood. Mothers are rushing to fill every jar and load the freezer. Children are helping to prepare dried fruits, nuts, beans, herbs and tea to be packed away just as the little squirrels are doing. We'll be ready and happy when those fall rains begin and a chilly frost settles over everything.

Jesus is coming! Wise men are preparing for this Great Day. Now is the time to accept God's atonement for us and confess our sins and send them on ahead, to be forgiven, so we can be free when the Day comes! Let us tell the story of God's Great Love to us. It is urgent that more will answer The Call and be brought into the Fold while there is still opportunity. There may not be much more time to encourage our loved ones along the way to be faithful. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20) —Martha Cover

HISTORICAL

EPHESUS: ANCIENT CITY OF SPLENDOR

A mighty roar went up from 25,000 throats, reverberated among the hills and carried far out over the sea. The crowd was assembled in the stadium of Ephesus for a special day of games and fights, of feasting and celebration, and of worship of the great Diana of the Ephesians. In the stadium all eyes were on the arena. Hard marble benches and the fierce sunlight were forgotten in the bloodthirsty excitement of the moment. Below, a huge tiger, kept confined and hungry for the occasion, was released from his cage. He paced around the enclosure in a snarling attempt to find a way of escape.

From the opposite end of the stadium a gong sounded, a small door opened and a nearly naked man appeared. He was young and strong and armed with a short sword which he gripped tightly but with obvious inexperience. His face showed the strain of a sleepless night. Though pale and frightened, his lips moved in prayer and he walked forward without hesitation. The tiger saw him and advanced growling. As he reached the trembling man, the huge cat crouched and leaped. The victim swung the sword and stepped aside diverting the spring of the beast. But he was no match for the giant cat, and in a few minutes it had torn him to death. Noise from the crowd became a chant: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," repeated over and over in victory. This young man was a member of the hated Christians who taught against the ungodliness of the great city of Ephesus and the worship of their idol.

Nearby in the magnificent temple of Diana, eunuch priests offered incense and sacrifices before the large idol Diana, believed to have fallen to earth from Jupiter. Such was the activity and worship of Ephesus in 60 A.D.

Ephesus was situated at the mouth of the Cayster River on the coast of the Aegean Sea near what is now

the village of Ayasoluk, Turkey. It was a beautiful city with gleaming marble buildings, artistic statuary and a cool sea breeze. Children ran in the streets and played, dodging between the piles of baskets and sandals, fruits and meats and the enclosed stalls of the silversmiths whose profit was in making and selling images of the famous goddess. Overhead, shrieking gulls swooped in from the sea, searching for bits of food.

Dominating the surrounding scene of activity and trade was the temple of Diana, or Artemis, whose size, workmanship and beauty made it one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and the greatest of all Greek temples. It was made of blocks of marble weighing tons apiece. The roof towered sixty feet high and rested on 128 marble pillars. The whole building covered more than two city blocks. Though rebuilt four times, it had occupied the same spot for over eight centuries.

Besides this, Ephesus was an important town with a population of 225,000. Ships brought in wares from the distant cities of Rome, Athens, Antioch and Corinth. Here began one of the main trade routes into Asia where caravans of stately camels carrying as much as 600 pounds apiece moved the freight to the interior cities of Laodicea, Colosse, and Antioch of Pisidia.

It was to this thriving seacoast city that Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, arrived by boat in 54 A.D. Paul was a restless and tireless preacher, passing through the cities of Asia making disciples of Christ wherever he went. In Ephesus he found twelve sincere men who were believers already. But Paul discovered they were somewhat ignorant of the way of the Lord. He asked them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"

"We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," they admitted.

"Unto what then were ye baptized?" Paul asked.

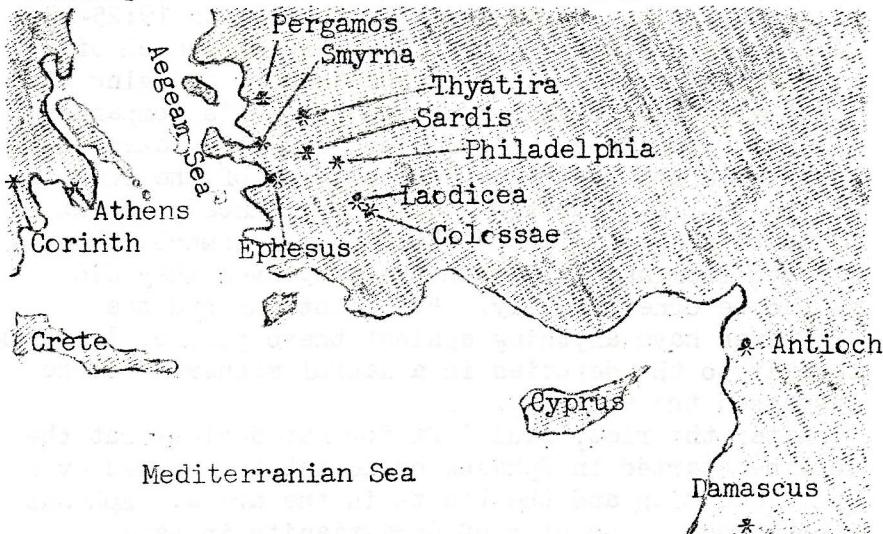
They answered simply, "Unto John's baptism."

Then Paul told them, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they

should believe on him which should come after him,
that is, on Christ Jesus."

When the twelve believers heard this they were baptized willingly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then when Paul laid his hands on them the Holy Ghost came on them and caused these men to speak other languages and tell of things to come. The church of the Ephesians was born!

This small church had trouble in store, for they were as a child surrounded by wolves. They began holding services in the Jewish synagogue and later in



the school of Tyrannus where they reasoned and taught daily for two years. From this small beginning the church grew and became a major influence in the city. Many repented, confessing their evil deeds. Even magicians and astrologers were converted so thoroughly that they brought together their books of magic which they placed in a huge pile to burn publicly. Someone figured their value at 50,000 pieces of silver or about \$8,000.

The whole city of Ephesus was shaken at this new movement to Christianity. So many were deserting the worship of Diana that a silversmith named Demetrius

became alarmed. This man made silver shrines--images of Diana--to sell to the people. He called a meeting of his fellow craftsmen and told them, "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover, ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth." (Acts 19:25-27)

These men started a riot that affected much of the city. The people rushed to the theatre dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's companions. Alexander, an Ephesian believer, was also taken, but they could not make a defense because of the shouting of the people. For two hours they chanted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Finally the townclerk quieted them and told them that whatever they did should be done lawfully. "If Demetrius and the craftsmen have anything against these people, let them take it to the deputies in a lawful manner." So he dismissed the assembly.

After the riot, Paul left for Macedonia. But the work he started in Ephesus could not be stopped even by persecution and the beasts in the arena. Ephesus soon became the center of Christianity in Asia. Timothy and the apostle John were among the bishops of the church. Eight of the books of the New Testament were first issued there. And it is thought to be the burial place for St. John and St. Luke.

Ephesus declined gradually after Roman times. The silt brought in by the river filled the harbor and hindered its trade. Repeatedly it was plundered: by the Goths in 262 A.D., by the Arabs in 655 and 717 A.D. and by the Turks in 1090 and in the fourteenth century. It was finally completely ruined in 1403.

The Turks used the pure marble of the temple for their mosques, and the Christians carried it away for

churches. It was leveled so completely that not even a mound marked the spot for centuries. Asiatic farmers plowed over it and harvested crops year after year not realizing its former splendor.

In 1863, J. T. Wood of the British Museum began excavations at the site of old Ephesus. Noticing some ruins in a barley field, he began digging and eventually struck a corner of the temple built in 350 B.C. Below this he found the foundation of an older structure of identical size built in the sixth century B.C. In a later exploration (1904) by D. G. Hogarth, also of the British Museum, three still older, smaller structures were discovered below the center of the last two. The approximate date of the first building is 600 B.C.

Now only ruins remain to mark the site of once famous and splendid Ephesus. Its harbor is now a marsh and twelve feet of soil cover its streets. The walls of the ancient stadium still show its gigantic size. Quoting from Letters From Bible Lands by D. L. Miller, "The desolation and ruin of Ephesus is complete. It will never be inhabited again. Never again will go up from the midst of this old stadium the wail of the helpless victim, sacrificed to gratify the greed for blood of the inhabitants of the old city. And who is to say that the blood of the Christian martyr has not cried unto the Lord, and that His judgment has not fallen upon a city drunken with the blood of the saints?" --L.C.

b1z
Information from the Bible, Letters From Bible Lands, by D. L. Miller, Halley's Bible Handbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica, and The Martyr of the Catacombs.

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THE BIBLE

This Book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter. Here paradise is restored, Heaven opened and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened in Judgement, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with it's sacred contents. (Author Unknown)

I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men,
How He called little children as lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with them then.
I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,
His arms had been thrown around me,
And that I might have seen His kind look when He said,
"Let the little ones come unto Me."

Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go,
And ask for a share in His love;
And if I now earnestly seek Him below,
I shall see Him and hear Him above.
In that beautiful place He has gone to prepare
For all who are washed and forgiven;
And many dear children are gathering there,
"For of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

By Mrs. Jemima Thompson Luke Selected by Peter Cover

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"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

GREAT GOD OF NATIONS, NOW TO THEE

Great God of nations, now to Thee
Our hymn of thankfulness we raise;
With humble heart, and bending knee,
We offer Thee our thanks and praise.

We give Thee thanks, Almighty God,
For all the kindness Thou hast shown
To this blest land our fathers trod,
This land we humbly call our own.

We thank Thee that the Gospel's light
Through all our land its radiance sheds;
Dispels the shades of error's night,
And heavenly blessings round us spreads.

Great God, preserve us in Thy fear;
And may we ever thankful be;
O spread Thy truth's bright precepts here,
That all the people worship Thee.

By Alfred Alexander Woodhull, 1829
(1810-1836)

From The Christian Hymnary

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REMEMBER HIS MARVELLOUS WORKS

"O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord, and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the Lord our God: his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations." (Psalm 105: 1-8)

This begins a series of three psalms that comprise a national song of thanksgiving. The writer recounts some of the events of Israel's history--especially their captivity and deliverance in Egypt--and how God worked to deliver them even though they were not always faithful.

In this introduction the writer insists that we "remember his (God's) marvellous works that he hath done." So much of thankfulness depends on our remembering the many works of God in our lives. In Psalm 103:2 the writer tells us to "forget not all his benefits."

We are often forgetful and this is a fault. At first we might think we can't help it if we forget. Our children often give the excuse "I forgot" when they leave an assigned job undone. But this is not a valid excuse. We don't forget things that are really on our minds and important to us. We don't forget to eat or to go to bed at night. If we really appreciate the marvellous works of God and His benefits to us we will not forget them and we will be thankful.

Recently a friend gave me a jar of pickles he had made. This man lives alone and likes to raise and can food, so his pickles were something special to him. Of course I thanked him. But a short time later he asked me how I liked them. I was ashamed that I couldn't remember whether we had tried them or not. We have pickles at home fairly often, but this was no valid excuse. If I had respected this little gift properly, I would have known whether or not we had opened it. Later, after we had tried them I thanked him and told him they were good--which they were. But it wasn't the same as if I had appreciated them properly.

This example is of a very small gift. How much more important it is that we respect God's many, great gifts. To respect a gift is to respect the giver, and the opposite is also true.

We in California are experiencing a period of months of dry weather. People are beginning to complain bitterly about lack of rain, scarcity of pasture, no snow for skiing etc. But when we have abundance of rain, good crops, full wells, how do we respond to it? Are we careful to thank God for these blessings? The ungodly would take them for granted--conditions that men deserve because it is always so. And as soon as the rain is withheld, they are quick to blame God or blame "the weather". Let us not forget His benefits.

These earthly blessings lose their appearance of importance beside the blessings of salvation God freely gives to His own. How much better to have sins forgiven than to have good crops. How much more we need the gift of the Holy Spirit than abundance of natural rain. Here we trust that God will not forget us. Micah 7:18-19 says, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." This He does

through the atonement of Jesus on the cross. God doesn't forget us but He will forget our sins and remember them against us no more.

In Psalm 106 the psalmist describes a condition that came upon Israel when they did forget God and His benefits. God had brought them miraculously from bondage in Egypt. Though the Egyptians feared that the Israelites would become strong, they had effectively kept them in submission. They had oppressed this nation to the point that they could never have escaped Egypt if God had not intervened. He brought them to the Red Sea where He delivered Israel and destroyed the Egyptian army. Israel sang a song of praise and thanksgiving for deliverance. But many of them soon forgot these marvellous works of God. Psalm 106:13-15 describes their forgetfulness: "They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."

This can happen when anyone forgets God. When they "lusted exceedingly" or desired things they should not have had, they were allowed to have them but the results were disastrous. Read the account of the journeyings of the Israelites. Only two of those of age starting from Egypt were alive forty years later to enter the promised Caanan.

Leanness of soul is the dismal result of unthankfulness and lust. To those in this condition it might even seem that all is well and going their way. They get their requests and have their own way, but the soul is neglected and goes hungry. We want to be healthy in soul even though it may mean we do not always have our wills done. God's way is best. How much better to humbly submit to Him, to be thankful for His benefits and to experience His salvation. —L.C.

"Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

—Psalm 107

CHRISTIAN WARFARE

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17)

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (I Peter 5:8)

We can see from these scriptures that the followers of Jesus have an adversary and are engaged in a war. This war is the most important ever fought on this earth. It began in Eden and will not end until the return of our Lord. In most wars the soldiers are in danger of losing their natural lives, and many do. However, in this war, not only is the natural life involved, but the battle is primarily for possession of the soul of man, and our eternal welfare hangs in the balance.

We can read in the scripture how powerful this enemy is, and it would make us tremble if our Captain had not gone before in the battle and overcome the adversary. Another warrior in this battle, the apostle John, assures us that ". . . greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." (I John 4:4)

In battles of this world, it is always uncertain who the victor will be, but in this battle we already know which side will win, and if we are faithful we will enjoy the reward of the victors, even though we might have to lose our natural life for the cause.

In any battle it is a great advantage to know the tactics and weaknesses of the enemy. Our Lord has supplied us information on both. How diligent we should be in studying his tactics so we will recognize his attempts to deceive and overcome us! Are we always careful to have on the "whole armour of God?" Do we make full use of our privilege to communicate with God in prayer and ask for the assistance and guidance to overcome and put to flight the enemy? He is able

to help us overcome, and He will do His part! Are we doing ours? If we are lost, the fault will be ours.

There are principles involved in a natural battle that apply to our battle as well. I would like to make some comparisons and ask some questions.

In a natural battle it is very desirable to give the soldiers some "basic training" to teach them the methods of warfare and build up their physical strength before the active combat. Parents, you are primarily responsible for this training in your children! What kind of basic training are you giving? Do you allow or encourage them to mix with the enemy? Do you allow them to indulge in the pleasures of sin, thereby poisoning and weakening them? Are we building up their spiritual strength so they will be able to stand when they take up the cross and actively enter the battle on their own?

"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" is our only offensive weapon. Do we familiarize our children with it by reading it to them? Do we encourage them to read and study it themselves, so they will become adept in its use? Maybe we could stand to study it a little more ourselves! Do we use every opportunity to enlarge and strengthen their shield of faith? They will surely need it as large and strong as possible in this time of deception and false teaching!

Another principle in warfare is the need for soldiers to be convinced of the rightness of the cause, and for them to have a patriotic spirit that will cause them to give their all for the cause. Do we have that spirit and feeling in the cause of the Master? If so, disagreeable weather, distance, or worldly cares shouldn't keep us from meetings. If we have time to go to sales, or fishing, vacationing, etc. but cannot seem to get time to visit the sick and elderly, or help when our brother is in need, then I fear we are not placing the kingdom first and giving our all to His service.

Another principle is the need for unity. There is no need to say what would happen to an army of this

world if it didn't fight in harmony and unity. This principle is even more necessary in our spiritual warfare! I am not so old but I have seen numerous occasions when the kingdom has suffered loss because of the lack of unity of professed soldiers of the cross. One hymn says:

"Shall children of the heavenly King
Fall out while on the road?
Nay, rather let them praises sing,
And bear each other's load."

Why is it so hard for us to deny ourselves of things that grieve our brethren? Is it not evidence of selfishness and self will in the life of the individual? How many souls do you suppose the adversary has wrested from the kingdom because some weren't willing to deny themselves of something that wasn't a necessity, for the sake of peace and harmony? How it must please the adversary to see brethren quarrel and cause their children and other onlookers to become discouraged and drift into the world! When we desire something questionable, we should consider well the value of the souls we might endanger!

Another principle we would do well to pay closer heed to is the necessity of soldiers protecting and assisting each other when the enemy attacks. How is it with us? If we see our brother stumble or fall under the attack of the enemy do we go to his assistance? Or do we just tell others that something ought to be done about it? Surely if we love our brother, we will do all in our power to aid him. The scripture tells us, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1) Notice it says restore, not find fault with. I would plead with us, brethren, that we would have more love and concern for each other, and for our children, and for those who might be looking on!

We can read of the closing scenes of this great warfare in the latter part of Revelation. Who would want to be in the enemy's camp then? The surest way

to be safe then is to stay on the safest possible ground now! Let us put forth our every effort to build up and strengthen the brethren, and unitedly draw close to the Lord where we can put to flight the enemy, and be assured of entering into that peaceable kingdom above! May we say with the apostle Paul, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

—James Beery
Nappanee, Indiana

PARABLE STUDY

THE KING WHO MADE A MARRIAGE FOR HIS SON Matthew 22:2-14

In verse 2, we understand that God is preparing His kingdom for us.

Verse 3 tells us that God sent His prophets to bid His chosen ones to come to His kingdom, but they would not listen to them.

Verse 4: So He sent more prophets and finally His own Son to call them to His feast, but they would not hear even His own Son.

Verse 5: And they went about their earthly cares, "one to his farm, another to his merchandise."

Then in verse 6, "the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them," referring to God's chosen people who killed the prophets and even His only Son and thought they were doing God's will.

Verse 7: God's chosen nation would not accept His only Son, so God's wrath was kindled against that nation; and He sent armies that scattered them abroad and almost destroyed them.

Verse 8: "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy." His chosen people would not listen to Him

or obey His words, so (verses 9 and 10) God sent His disciples to every nation to call us all to get ready for that great judgment day when we will meet our King.

In verse 11 where it says when the king saw a man "which had not on a wedding garment," it is referring to us when we shall be called to the judgment: if we have not made ourselves ready, God will say to us as in the 12th verse, "Why do you come up here when you did not do My will on earth?" Then as is seen in verses 13 and 14, His angels will cast those who did not do His will on earth into the lower parts of hell.

All men will go to that judgment day, but only if we have been made ready will He say, "Come in and enjoy My feast."

--Verl Brubaker
Nappanee, Indiana

One night in the afterglow
In the beautiful, golden west,
Just as the sun was setting
And nature was at her best,
When the waves of the broad Pacific
Were tinging with blue and gold,
I saw a wonderful vision
Before my eyes unfold.

I saw the cross of Jesus
Pictured clear in the deep blue sky,
And Christ Himself was hanging there
For the sins of you and me.
Oh, the awful pain and anguish
In His eyes was hard to see,
And the hot tears quickly started
As He suddenly looked at me.

Those glorious eyes were pleading
For love, as He came to die,
And I saw that the heart was breaking
Of the Master of earth and sky.
The thorns were pressing keenly
Upon that brow so sweet,

And the pain was growing more intense
In His nail-pierced hands and feet.

I wondered how He could love me
When my sins had nailed Him there,
And as I sat in amazement watching
That face so pure and fair,
Suddenly the scene was shifted,
And, instead of the cross, I saw
A throne of purest, beaten gold,
And my soul was filled with awe;

For the One who sat upon it,
Radiant with life and light,
Robed in royal garments,
In fine linen pure and bright,
Was my precious Lord and Master
Who from sin had set me free,
And whose loving heart was broken
As He died on the cross for me.

Each moment increased my rapture,
For I saw my Lord arise,
And reaching down, He lifted me
To His throne in the glowing skies.
I couldn't believe my senses
As He gently said to me,
"In return for thy loving service, child,
I've a beautiful crown for thee."

What had I done for the Master
That He should treat me so?
I with my faults and weaknesses,
And the tears began to flow;
But in tender love my Saviour
Wiped all my tears away,
And the Heavens re-echoed with joy and song
And I knew I was Home to stay.

Author not known.
Selected by Loraine Garber.

What if I say—

"The Bible is God's Holy Word,
Complete, inspired, without a flaw,"
But let its pages stay
Unread from day to day,
And fail to learn therefrom God's law?

What if I go not there to seek

The truth of which I glibly speak,
For guidance on this earthly way?
Does it matter what I say?

What if I say—

That Jesus Christ is Lord divine;
Yet fellow-pilgrims can behold
Naught of the Master's love in me,
No grace of kindly sympathy?
If I am of the Shepherd's fold,
Then shall I know the Shepherd's voice,
And gladly make His way my choice.

We are saved by faith, yet faith is one
With life, like daylight and the sun.
Unless they flower in our deeds,
Dead, empty husks are all the creeds;
To call Christ, Lord, but strive not to obey,
Belies the homage that with words I pay.

Selected from The Messenger of Truth.

When Jesus to the water went

To be baptized of John,
God like a dove the Holy Spirit sent,
And with His voice approved.

Now we in water are baptized—

We who in Christ believe,
And God the Holy Spirit sends
To all who will receive,
To show that He approves.

—Guy Hootman

HISTORICAL

SMYRNA

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

(Revelation 2:8-10)

These were the words John was directed to write to the church at Smyrna, one of the seven churches of Asia. They were words of comfort to a group of persecuted, poverty-stricken (materially speaking) people who were endeavoring to faithfully serve the Lord. The churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia were alone among the seven which were given only words of encouragement and no condemnation.

Smyrna is an ancient city, existing from the dawn of history up to the present time. It is located on the west coast of Asia Minor approximately fifty miles north of Ephesus. It has the advantage of lying next to the Hermus River as it flows into the sea, and it has a natural harbor. Traditionally, Smyrna was the birthplace of Homer.

By sometime around 700 B.C. Smyrna became the thirteenth Ionian state and prospered as a Greek commercial city, lying on the trade route between the Lydian empire and the west. Then in 627 B.C. Alyattes III of Lydia conquered the city, and for 300 years it existed as an unimportant village. Alexander the Great wanted to rebuild Smyrna, and Antigonus (316-301 B.C.), one of his generals, began to carry out his plan. Soon Smyrna was flourishing again and was one of the chief cities of Asia.

When Rome came to power Smyrna allied itself with that great empire and proved very useful to Roman naval encounters. By 195 B.C. Smyrna worshipped Rome as a spiritual power and later received permission from Tiberius to build the second temple in Asia to the emperor. This pagan city was proud that its Caesar cult had existed for so many years.

Smyrna was known for its knowledge of science and medicine and for its outstanding architecture. It has been called the "Crown of Ionia" and the "Ornament of Asia". The main street of the city, called the Street of Gold, began at the temple of Zeus and ended at the temple of Cybele (considered to be the mother of the gods). The acropolis was on a steep peak 1250 feet high and was circled by a ring of beautiful public buildings, referred to by an ancient historian as the "crown of porticoes".

The Christian church at Smyrna was founded early, having its beginnings in the large Jewish colony there. At first Christianity was considered a sect of Judaism, and Christians were tolerated reasonably well. By the time Nero rose to power in Rome, however, Christianity was considered illegal, primarily because its adherents refused to worship the emperor. In wealthy Smyrna Christians soon learned about poverty--their shops were boycotted, they were discriminated against when they tried to find work, and even those who may have been prosperous soon lost their material possessions.

The bishop of Smyrna was Polycarp, a disciple of John. He was a shining example to his church and Christians down through the ages as he faced martyrdom for refusing to worship the emperor, saying, "I have served my Lord Christ Jesus eighty-six years, and He has never done me any harm. How can I deny my King, who hath hitherto preserved me from all evil, and so faithfully redeemed me? . . . Bring on the beasts, or the fire, or whatever thou mayest choose: thou shalt not, by either of them, move me to deny Christ, my Lord and Saviour." This occurred about 168 A.D. It

is also written that when the people of Smyrna who witnessed the many persecutions "saw, how inhumanely these people were treated, and, on the other hand, how patiently the suffering Christians endured the tortures, they were greatly amazed, yea terrified."

After Constantinople became the seat of the government of the Empire, trade between Anatolia and the west decreased in importance and Smyrna consequently declined. In 1084 the Turks seized the city and ravaged it several times after that. In 1402 Mongols stormed Smyrna and massacred nearly all its inhabitants. The city rose again from adversity, however, and became the chief provincial factory of the British Turkey Company from the early seventeenth century till 1825. It also had trading connections with France, Holland and other nations. Smyrna today is a modern city of 250,000, one of the principal ports of the Turkish republic, and is known by its name Izmir.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Martyrs Mirror, and Encyclopaedia Britannica.

--Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

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BIRTH

BAKER - Rachel Ann, born November 10 to Paul and Mary Baker of Maple, Ontario.

THANKFULNESS

Another year is passing,

As seasons come and go,
Month after month outclassing;
We labor, learn and grow.

God's mercies more abounding
Daily—the store is great;
His praise we should be sounding,
Telling our happy state.

The stream of daily bounty,
Still flowing full and free,
In county after county,
God's benefits to see.

We live by God's upholding,
Pulsating, active life;
The Spirit's power unfolding,
The way from sin and strife.

O may we all desiring
To follow in the way,
The sinful life retiring,
By praying day by day.

O grant us of Thy favor,
To love Thy living Word,
To follow our dear Saviour,
Redeemer and our Lord.

—J. I. Cover, 1964

BE HUMBLE

Be kind and gentle, meek and mild,
An humble, cheerful, loving child.

If bent the sapling, so the tree;
Help each dear child grow up toward Thee.

Selected from The Christian School Builder

THE MAN WHO WALKED WITH GOD

Genesis 5:18-24

The man we will talk about this time lived thousands of years ago, before the flood, when men lived much longer than they do now. His father lived 962 years and his son lived for 969 years. This man lived here only 365 years, but he walked with God in such a way that he didn't have to die like other men. God took him. This was because he had faith in God and he knew that he pleased God.

This man was also a prophet. Even so long ago he told of the time yet to come when Jesus will return to earth. He said, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 14,15)

To "walk with God" is more important than to have feet and legs to be able to walk and run on the playground. It means that we please God, do what He wants us to do and trust that His way is best. To walk with God means to love Jesus Christ and believe His Word.

Who was this man that walked with God before the flood?

Fill in the blanks to find the answer.

1. By _____ was translated that he should not see death, and was not _____, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this _____, that he pleased God. (Hebrews 11:5)

2. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord _____ of thee, but to do _____, and to love _____, and to walk _____ with thy God. (Micah 6:8)

3. He that saith he _____ in him ought himself also so to _____, even as he (Jesus) walked. (I John 2:6)
—L.C.

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"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." 1 Peter 2:11

ONE DAY

One day when heaven was filled with His praises,
One day when sin was as black as could be,
Jesus came forth to be born of a virgin,
Dwelt among men, my example is He!

One day they led Him up Calvary's mountain,
One day they nailed Him to die on the tree;
Suffering anguish, despised and rejected,
Bearing our sins, my Redeemer is He!

One day they left Him alone in the garden,
One day He rested, from suffering free;
Angels came down o'er His tomb to keep vigil;
Hope of the hopeless, my Saviour is He!

One day the grave could conceal Him no longer,
One day the stone rolled away from the door;
Then He arose, over death He has conquered;
Now is ascended, my Lord evermore!

One day the trumpet will sound for His coming,
One day the skies with His glory will shine;
Wonderful day, my beloved ones bringing;
Glorious Saviour, this Jesus is mine!

Living, He loved me; dying, He saved me;
Buried, He carried my sins far away;
Rising, He justified freely forever:
One day He's coming; O, glorious day!

By J. Wilbur Chapman, 1859-1918

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GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." —Luke 2:10-14

With these words the fear-stricken shepherds were told of the birth of the Son of God. Not too many times in the long history of the world have angels appeared and spoken to men. But this was the occasion of the coming of Jesus Christ as a human baby—born of a woman—the incarnation of God.

The angel brought "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." These Jewish shepherds must have been waiting for the Saviour to come because they believed the message and went immediately to find the Baby. After they found the Baby Jesus they were infected with this "great joy." They returned to their sheep "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told unto them."

I wish we could all receive the joy these good tidings can bring. In this world of sin there is far too little joy. Particularly as we look around us at this time of year, it is easy to become downcast. Supposedly it is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus. But the grandest celebrations, the brightest decorations, the most lavish gifts are not by the people of God but those farthest from the truth. It has become an almost entirely secular celebration.

Looking back into history we find that the customs attending the celebration of Christmas have mostly come from groups of people we would not like to imitate. Many of these customs originated in pagan cultures even before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. How they came to be accepted by Christian people was the result of an attitude of compromise by the officials and missionaries of the Catholic Church.

Encyclopaedia Britannica says: "For several centuries (after its first observances in the third or fourth century—Ed.) Christmas was solely a church anniversary observed by religious services. But as Christianity spread among the people of pagan lands, many of the practices of the winter solstice were blended with those of Christianity because of the liberal ruling of Gregory I, the Great, and the co-operation of the missionaries.

"Thus, Christmas became both religious and secular in its celebration, at times reverent, at others gay. From the pagan accent on light it is not difficult to trace the rise of lights and open fires—from the bonfires of sun worship and their variant the yule log to the many customs centering around the candle and its legends to light the Christ child."

Much could be written by way of proof that most of the customs of Christmas have not come from the true Church. But perhaps we can more profitably seek and find something to rejoice about as we contemplate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. We can well be joyful if we have come to Him for salvation. It was the time when God came to dwell with us and to put into effect His pre-arranged plan to save mankind.

The world can celebrate with gaiety and indulgence the birth of Jesus because as a baby He placed no obligation on men. He demanded no decision then. But when we see His purpose in coming into the world, we can have joy only if we belong to Him. Though the Baby Jesus puts no obligation on anyone, the crucified and risen Jesus does place the greatest obligation. When we see Him on the cross and then risen victorious

over death with all power in heaven and in earth, then we must make a choice—either to submit to Him and follow Him and have His peace and joy, or to reject Him and in turn be rejected by Him.

The real joy comes when we realize that Jesus was born a man to conquer sin and death. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (I Corinthians 15:21) We learn in God's Word that there was no other name and no other way whereby we could be saved.

When each one of us can realize that Jesus died for me—when we know certainly that without Him we are lost forever—when we can look back and see victory over sin because of the grace of this crucified one—then we can know the joy that was announced at the time of His birth. Let the world have its time of gaiety, carelessness, lavish expense on decorations and useless gifts. May it be for us to rejoice at the birth of the Redeemer and Saviour of our souls.

While we were never commanded to celebrate the birth of Jesus, it is a fact that many wonderful, memorable miracles attended His birth. Much is told for us to remember and appreciate. One Christian writer gave good advice. After listing many of the abuses and dangers in the world's celebrations he wrote: "The Christian experiences a deep joy and gratitude toward God when he reads the account of the birth of Jesus, and thinks of the great love God had for fallen men, to send His Only Son among them, as a helpless Babe. But the Christian's joy and the carnal man's hilarity are two different things. And we do well not to confuse them... If we wish to observe Christ's nativity at one special time of the year, we should try to do so in all reverence, worshiping Him not only in the way the Wise Men did, as a God born a babe, but also as the Saviour of mankind, crucified, risen, and ascended. If we wish to give, let us give to the poor and needy, without thought of recompence. If we like the evergreen tree, let's admire it in its native state. And if we wish to observe this season

(Continued on page 7)

THAT WE MIGHT KNOW THE THINGS
THAT ARE FREELY GIVEN TO US OF GOD
I Corinthians 2:12

Many gifts have been bestowed in time past by men of wealth and lesser means upon their fellow men, and perhaps from various motives. No doubt much has been given out of good will and love in the breast for some esteemed one, and to others who may be in poverty and less fortunate. Large gifts have been made to educational and other public projects. Some gifts have been bestowed, perhaps, for the acquisition of fame and a name. No doubt large sums of money have been given to public men as bribes to win their favor for selfish interests, and this kind of gift is no doubt what King Solomon meant when he said, "A gift destroyeth the heart."

Some gifts are given according to Matthew 6:3-4 where none but the donor and the all-seeing eye of Jehovah are aware. But in the above scripture we are told of One who has an unbounded storehouse of good, which as in the case of Simon the sorcerer cannot be purchased with money, but is waiting to be freely given to those who in truth feel the need and ask for the bountiful things that are for their good.

Innumerable are the things that are freely given to us of God. Do we know this, or are we ignorant of the hand that bestows every blessing? Can we see the hand that brought into being the myriad forms of creation: animal, vegetable and inanimate things, providing for their existence and reproduction? Can we see Him in the creation of life, air, water and the many things in which man's power to create is futile and impotent? Yet no creation is without a creator. Human intelligence should freely see the deity of Almighty God and the truth of His declaration, "All the earth is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." This God of all goodness and true riches gave to you and to me the gift of His Son, to provide for that which none other could do: "the perfection and fullness of glory,"

which no man of his own power has ever seen. And do we know Him and the things He so freely gives us?

It is said of Israel whom God had chosen for a peculiar treasure unto Him, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." (Isaiah 1:2-3) Jesus in that last night's prayer said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." And it was of this one that Paul said, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Paul also wrote, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit, for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." So he who has the spirit of God does know of the things that are freely given.

Jesus gave the free gift of a possible regeneration and rebirth--rebirth into new life. And with it He gives the power to sustain that life. That life, being out of harmony with the spirit of the world, may meet the opposition of the world, but He freely gives the power to overcome the world, to overcome evil with good. He gives the power to rejoice in trials and temptations, persecutions and suffering for righteousness sake. He gives the power of liberty, liberty from the bondage of corruption. He gives the power of His peace, so much greater than that which the world giveth. He gives the spirit of hope, the anchor of the soul. He freely gives the highway of humility, the only safe thoroughfare to glory, for the prophet Isaiah (2:11-12) says, "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that

is lifted up; and he shall be brought low." He gives the assurance of His blessed care to His people, who are of much more value than the sparrow. He gives the gracious promise of remission of sins to those who confess to Him; He also gives us the propensity in our hearts to forgive.

Last but not least, He gives the gift of eternal life--"for the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"--by His grace. By grace ye are saved, not of works; for works, however great, cannot merit nor purchase eternal life. But good works may appeal to the grace of God, as it will when it will be said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." (Matthew 25:34-36)

--Elder David A. Skiles

Made available by Harvey Skiles

BIRTHS

BRUBAKER - A daughter, Emily Jean, born November 13 to Verl and Margaret Brubaker of Nappanee, Indiana.

WAGNER - A daughter, Mary Ruth, born November 27 to Daniel and Thelma Wagner of Bradford, Ohio.

MARTIN - A daughter, Linda Rose, born December 6 to David and Mary Ann Martin of Dalton, Ohio.

Continued from page 4

in school let's do it in a worshipful way, 'as to the Lord, and not unto men.' (Colossians 3:23)" From The Challenge of the Child. —L.C.

THE GREAT SUPPER

Luke 14:16-24

Whilst I am a stranger to most of you, I nevertheless feel assured by the signs I witness that I can confidently and affectionately address some of you, and I trust a goodly number too, as beloved brethren and sisters. This is, so far, as it should be. But what would be the joy of my heart, and what would be the joy of heart with each one of you, could it be said that this entire congregation is of one mind and all speak the same thing! But the words of my text, harmonizing with the closing words of another parable, recorded by Matthew, which declare that "many are called, but few chosen," may continue to be true, for a long time yet to come. Whilst the advocates of election and predestination claim this as one of their proof texts, to my mind it proves the exact reverse. "Many are called." Here, if I mistake not, the German has it: "The many are called." I take this to mean that all are called. Now compare this with what is said here in my text: "Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." This surely proves that all are called or invited to the great supper. First, the Jews were invited. When Jesus sent forth the twelve He commanded them saying: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Here it is plain that the Jews were the first to be invited. "But they all with one mind began to make excuse." Next then the poor of the city were invited. Still there was room. Next the outcasts and beggars were invited. These included the

very lowest of the Gentile nations, and comprehend all that live, every creature.

Now I ask, in the name of all that is reasonable, can we, dare we, accuse the Lord of dealing deceitfully? Perish the thought forever. No! He invites all because it is His blessed will to see all come and sit at His table spread with the great love feast which He has prepared for all who are willing and desire to come. This very thought is the joy of my heart and the boast of my tongue. And it is a joy which no man taketh from me, because it rests on the rock of Divine Truth. But a preparation is necessary. We can hardly separate the parable under consideration from the one recorded in Matthew twenty-second chapter. There we read of a wedding dinner made by a king, to celebrate the marriage of his son. And when the king came in he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And the king said: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." And why was he speechless? If he would have had any reasonable excuse to offer for the unprepared appearance which he made, would he have been speechless? Reason says at once. He would have urged his inability to procure a suitable dress for the occasion, as the cause for his appearing in the way he did, if any such cause had existed. And the king knew this full well; otherwise he would not have required all to have on the wedding garment.

I now call your attention to the closing words of the parable: "I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." The reason for this is found in the fact that they would not come. They were the first to be invited. Had they come, they would have received the right hand of welcome. But notice the unreasonable excuses they made. One had bought a piece of ground, and he must go and see it, as if night were the time to look at land. Another must try the five yoke of oxen he had that day bought, as if night were the best time to do this. Another had married a wife and could not come,

as if night were not a suitable time to enjoy a rich supper with his bride. We wonder at these vain and almost unnatural excuses; but do we find the excuses of men any more reasonable today? Men hazard their souls in a life of sin, not for want of invitations, entreaties and warnings from the Lord to come unto Him, but because they will not. The Lord pleads with men today, just as He pleaded with Israel centuries ago. Hear what He says to Israel by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel? "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions . . . and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye."

And now, brethren and friends, to make a brief application of some of the great principles laid down, I will say that the Lord's Supper is the great love feast which He has prepared for you, for me, for all. This great love feast, of which our own ordinance by His appointment, and bearing the same name, is a beautiful and fitting emblem, is neither more nor less than the bountiful provisions Christ has made for the salvation of all. These provisions are the great truths of His Word, filled with His love. The Lord Jesus says: "I am the bread of life." To the Jews He said: "Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died." "If any man eat of the bread which I shall give him, he shall live forever." When we are faithfully obeying the Lord from love in our hearts, we are eating this life-giving bread. Every truth which the Lord has revealed, and by which the spiritual man is fed as to his soul, may be regarded as a component part of this great feast.

Jesus said to the tempter: "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The tempter here meant material bread for the body, and the Lord answered him according to that meaning. This is the kind of bread, material bread, with which the devil seeks to satisfy

every demand of our being. It embraces everything the natural appetite of man craves. The devil is ever seeking to lead men to feed on the husks which the swine do eat, and to be satisfied with that kind of food. But the blessed Lord Jesus resists the tempter, and continually seeks to lead men into a higher, nobler and heavenly life. He says to every sinner: "Arise, and go to thy Father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned before heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." This is repentance. This is the first move man makes in the way of approach to the feast the Lord has prepared. "Man liveth by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." This embraces all of Revealed Truth. Every law, every precept, every prophecy, every parable has some outflowing, healing virtue, some life-imparting power. We touch the hem of its garment when we read or hear in sincerity of heart. O sinner, come and partake of this feast, and thy soul shall live.

From Life and Labors of Elder John Kline
Selected by Daniel F. Wolf

UNDERNEATH, THE EVERLASTING ARMS

Above us are the Eyes that never slumber,
That watch against whatever hurts or harms;
Around us are His mercies without number,
And underneath, the Everlasting Arms.

Above us are the Hands that once were riven,
That broke the spell of Satan's cunning charms;
Around us are the pledges that He has given,
And underneath, the Everlasting Arms.

Above us are the fruits of His affection,
The blessed hope that stills our dread alarms;
Around us are the wings of His protection,
And underneath, the Everlasting Arms.

By W. M. Czampake
Selected by Alma Garber

PARABLE STUDY**PARABLE OF THE NET**

Jesus taught the people this short parable in Matthew 13:47-50. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."

Jesus was using a common situation to make those people understand more clearly what the kingdom of Heaven is like. He was saying that His word or the word of God will be spread over the whole world so that everyone will be given the chance to repent of their sins and be baptized. But Jesus knew that His word would be rejected by more people than would accept it. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therewith. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." It seems that Jesus as well as fishermen have only two classes: that of a fisherman, either good or bad and that of Jesus, saved or lost. This is clearly brought out in Revelation 3:15-16. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

When the day of judgment comes the righteous will be gathered together and the wicked will surely be cast away as the fishermen were gathering the good but casting the bad away. May we always strive to do what is right and yield to God in such a way that we may be part of that great Kingdom of Heaven and not be cast out.

--David Cover
Tuolumne, California

HISTORICAL

PERGAMUM

"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." (Revelation 2:12-16)

These were the words the apostle John was instructed to write to the church at Pergamos, or Pergamum. They give us some insight into what kind of a church existed there--a church in a wicked, pagan city, which was faithful to the name of Christ and was suffering martyrdom, but which tolerated false teaching that allowed Christians to participate in some of the heathen immoralities surrounding them.

Pergamum was an important ancient city of Asia Minor, located 55 miles north of Smyrna and 15 miles inland from the coast. Its early beginnings are not known, but its existence goes back at least to 420 B.C. as is evidenced by coins made there at that time. The first ruler to proclaim himself king of Pergamum was Attalus I (241-197 B.C.), who allied the city with Rome and was rewarded with a share of Roman prosperity, culture, and success. Under Eumenes II (197-159 B.C.) Pergamum reached the height of its prosperity; it was the capital of a kingdom covering much of western Asia Minor. The last king of Pergamum, Attalus III, died

in 133 B.C. and left his kingdom to Rome. The Romans gave the kingdom the status of a province called Asia, and Pergamum remained the capital for two hundred years. With Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamum continued to rank as one of the three great cities of the province.

As a result of its early alliance with Rome, Pergamum was quick to adopt the imperial cult of emperor worship. The city was proud that it was the first in Asia to build a temple to Rome and Augustus in 29 B.C. A temple to Trajan was built at a later date. Pergamum was also a center of worship of Zeus, Athena, Asklepius and Dionysius. About one hundred years ago the throne-like altar of Zeus was discovered at Pergamum. This altar had been erected by Eumenes II in 180 B.C. to celebrate his victory over the Gauls. It is thought by some that either this altar or the temple to Rome may have been the place "where Satan's seat is" referred to in Revelation 2:13.

Pergamum boasted many beautiful buildings. Its Acropolis was filled with temples to its many deities, public buildings, a palace, theater, circus and library. The library at Pergamum was famous in the ancient world. Second only to that of Alexandria, it contained 200,000 volumes. Parchment was developed in Pergamum when a controversy arose with Egypt about importing papyrus. Thus, Pergamum was considered a center of art and culture in the ancient world.

The Christians were able to establish a group early in Pergamum, as evidenced by the fact that it was recognized as one of the seven churches of Asia. Pressure on Christians to compromise their principles in this idolatrous city must have been great and led to the admonition written by John in Revelation 2:14-16.

According to the writer of Martyrs Mirror, Antipas (in Revelation 2:13) was burned alive toward the end of the first century A.D. during the reign of Domitian.

After the fall of the Roman Empire Pergamum came under the power of the Byzantines, who refortified the city. Then early in the fourteenth century the

Moslems took control and were replaced by the Turks about 1825. Pergamum, now called Bergama, is still a commercial and administrative city of importance; it is located on the plain below the site of the ancient city.

Information from the Bible, Halley's Bible Handbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica and Martyrs Mirror.

--Dorothy Moore
Modesto, California

OUR GOD IS WITH US STILL

It matters not what others say,
Or what they think or do,
If we are walking in God's way
And to His word are true.

For He has given us a guide,
A rule by which to live,
And if in us His words abide
His blessings He will give.

It matters not what we may lose
Here in this world below,
God always will provide for those
Who honor to Him show.

So we have but to carry on
And strive to do His will;
His word we can depend upon;
Our God is with us still.

Selected by Bertie Baker

Love is the New Covenant motive for obedience.
Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
(John 14:15)

"THE FATHER OF ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE"**Genesis 12:1-24:10**

The man to identify this month is famous for his faith, and is sometimes called the father of the faithful. (See Romans 4:11 and 16) The Lord first called him to leave his country and his father's house and go to a land God would show him. He obeyed and God led him to the land of Canaan. God told him He would give this land of Canaan to him and to his family. He wondered about this as he had no children. But God told him that he and his wife would have a son.

This promised son was born miraculously because his parents were old. God proved the faith of this man when he told him to offer this special son as a sacrifice. The father did not refuse but began on the journey to the mountain where God told him it should be done. He came to the place and even went so far as to tie up his son and reach for the knife to slay him. He knew God could raise him to life again. God stopped him and provided a ram caught in a thicket nearby for the offering instead.

Because of his faith in God, God gave him great promises—that his descendants would be so many that they could not be counted and that all nations would be blessed in him. This man was the father of the chosen nation of Israel. Out of this nation came Jesus who was born to save His people and all those from any nation who would come to Him in faith.

Fill the blanks below:

1. Neither shall thy name any more be called _____, but thy name shall be _____; for a father of many nations have I made thee. (Genesis 17:5)
2. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be _____; because thou hast _____ my voice. (Genesis 22:18)
3. ..._____ believed God, and it was counted unto him for _____. (Romans 4:3) —L.C.